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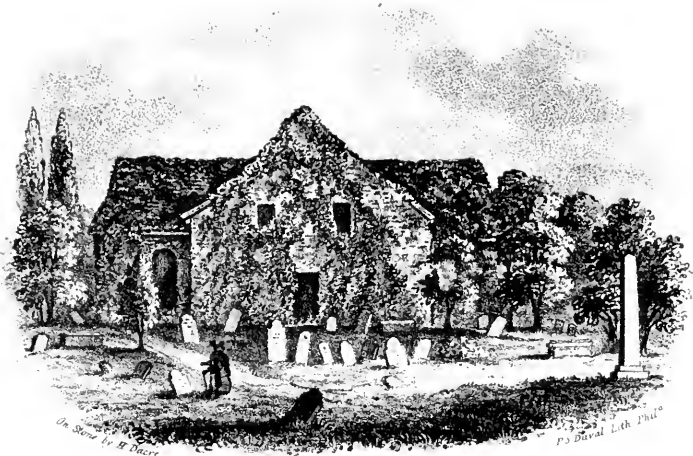












THE BLANDFORD CHURCH.  
BRISTOL PARISH. PETERSBURG VA

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“Thou art crumbling to the dust, old pile!  
Thou art hastening to thy fall;  
And round thee, in thy loneliness,  
Clings the ivy to thy wall.  
Thy worshippers are scattered now,  
Who met before thy shrine,  
And silence reigns, where anthems rose,  
In days of Auld lang syne.”



A HISTORY

OF

BRISTOL PARISH,

WITH A

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

OF ITS

OLDEST RECTOR,

AND AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING THE

EPITAPHS OF SOME OF ITS EARLY OFFICERS AND FRIENDS.

BY THE REV. PHILIP SLAUGHTER,

THE PRESENT INCUMBENT.

RICHMOND, VA.

B. B. MINOR, PUBLISHER.

1846.

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OFFICE OF S. L. MESSENGER.

TO

**MY BELOVED PARISHIONERS**

THIS

**HISTORY OF BRISTOL PARISH,**

AND

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF ITS LATE VENERABLE RECTOR

ARE INSCRIBED,

**AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,**

FOR MANY ACTS OF KINDNESS; BY

THE AUTHOR.



## INTRODUCTION.

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The author of this little contribution to Church history, is not ashamed to avow that he is one of those Virginians, who regards his native State with the feelings of a Southern man's heart, "who, while he loves all, yet holds it no sin to prefer some." He has a chord in his bosom, which vibrates at the name of Virginia, as naturally as the strings of a harp at the breathings of the wind. He trusts that this sentiment is not at all inconsistent with the patriotism of an American citizen. He prefers the government of the United States to any other system of polity in the world. He venerates above all other statesmen, those illustrious men who constructed that machine of self-government, a representative republic, and he prays that Heaven may preserve it in perpetual motion; and yet he never dreamed that this feeling, or prejudice, if you please, as an American citizen, was incompatible with the most enlarged philanthropy as a man, and so, with all his admiration for the Federal Government, and prayers for the perpetual durability of the Union, he hopes to be excused for regarding Virginia as the brightest link in that mystic chain, and cherishing for her a more cordial affection than for any other of its members, and all this without subjecting himself to the imputation of a want of a truly American feeling. With these sentiments, the history of Virginia has been to him a favorite study. He not merely takes pleasure in poring over the pages of her general historians, but it has given him particular delight to go to the original sources whence they drew their supplies, and to penetrate the inner chambers of social and domestic life, in which are hid many treasures which have either eluded the researches of the general historian, or were considered beneath the dignity of his plan. As such specimens of the materials, which have not yet been wrought into the fabric of our history, may be mentioned the "Bland Papers," edited by Mr. C. Campbell, of Petersburg; the "Westover Manuscripts," published by Edmund Ruffin, Esquire, and the "Historical Tracts," now being brought out, by Mr. Force, of the city of Washington.

But it is to the illustration of the Church history of the State, that this little

tract is devoted. Dearly as we love the "Old Dominion"—gladly as we pay her our allegiance—devoutly as we admire the lustre of her crown, of which her great men are the jewels, there is an institution, which we love infinitely more—the "Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

While our motto is "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," and although we esteem it a duty to love all who bear the image and breathe the spirit of Christ, and we constantly pray, that "all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life," yet among all the branches of the "one Catholic church," our allegiance is due, and our warmest affections are given to our Protestant Episcopal mother, at whose font we were baptized, at whose altars we have ministered, in whose bosom we hope to die.

" Beyond our highest joy  
We prize her heavenly ways,  
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,  
Her hymns of love and praise."

But it is to the illustration of the Church history of Virginia, that our plan is limited. 'Tis true, that the history of the church in Virginia, has already been written in a luminous and masterly manner. The well known work of Dr. Hawks, we regard as among the most valuable contributions to American ecclesiastical history. It is a work, whose authenticity, candor, and elegance of diction, have already won for it a place among the American classics, and which entitle it to one in the library of every gentleman in Virginia. But rich as is the harvest, which Dr. Hawks has reaped in the field of his labors, there are some gleanings left, which an humble follower may gather and bind into sheaves, which he hopes will prove an acceptable offering to his brethren in Christ. There is a great deal of rough material scattered throughout the diocese, in the Clerks' offices of the counties, in parochial records, in manuscript letters and diaries, and other like depositories, which ought to be collected and embodied in a permanent form, before they sink into the illegible dust, into which so many of them have already mouldered.

Again, there are many curious details, into which the general historian cannot descend, and yet there are those to whom they are exceedingly interesting: These should be preserved and made accessible to those who take pleasure in them.

It is with this view, that we propose to publish a series of historical tracts, derived from the sources which we have indicated above, if the success of this one should be sufficient to encourage the prosecution of the plan. There are no materials of history more authentic, and none which throw more light upon the subject

of them, than the documents of which I have spoken. For instance, the church establishment, in Virginia, before the revolution, is very little understood. There are much obscurity and confusion in the ideas of most men upon that subject. The historians are not very satisfactory in their expositions of the relations of the Church to the State, and of the influence of that anomalous union upon the interests of religion and the general welfare.

In our judgment, the continuous records of one of our old Parishes will do more to elucidate that subject, than any thing to which the public have yet had access. They take the student, as it were, behind the scenes, where he sees the actual working of the intricate mechanism, observes the relation of the several parts to each other, and the bearing of the whole upon the political, social, and ecclesiastical systems of the times.

Episcopalians, in Virginia, have been accustomed to look back upon their early civil, and ecclesiastical history, with very opposite feelings. To the statesman, the early age of the Republic is the golden age, when men lived near to the gods, and on the contemplation of it, we exclaim :

“They were the halcyon days of the world ;  
There has been no sun-shine so bright since,  
Nor such balminess in the air.”

The churchman, on the other hand, has been accustomed to regard it as the age of darkness, the retrospect of which fills him with shame and mortification, and he has felt that he could throw the mantle over the church until her revival in 1814. It is to this period that he loves to recur, and upon which he dwells with as much complacency as if the church “had been then hatched from the egg of night, and all of a sudden spread her radiant wings over the primeval darkness.”

With an honesty too stern to cover up her faults, and with a sensibility which shrinks from increasing the suspicion of it, we have been accustomed to hear the colonial church held up to indiscriminating reprobation, as though there was not a bright spot in her history, nor a redeeming trait in the character of her members. It is time that the public was disabused of such blind and unreasoning prejudices. The truth is, that where there is much folly and unfaithfulness to be confessed and lamented by the honest Episcopalian, there is not only something to be said in mitigation of the odium with which the Church, which tolerated these abuses, has been visited on account of them, but there are also some spotless pages on which the churchman may linger with hallowed joy. It should not be forgotten, that the diffusion of christianity was always held forth as one of the chief objects of the colonization of Virginia. This is the language of all the charters and com-

missions. When Sir Walter Raleigh assigned his patent to Sir Thomas Smith, he accompanied it with a donation of one hundred pounds, for the propagation of the Christian Religion in Virginia.

The king's instructions to the company command, that provision should be made that the "true word and service of God should be planted and used not in said colonies only, but among the savages bordering upon them, according to the doctrines and rites of the Church of England."

It was under the auspices of men, acting under instructions like these, that Virginia was colonized.

As chaplain to the little band of emigrants, which was sent over by the London Company, in 1606, was the Rev. Mr. Hunt. It was he who first administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Virginia, at Jamestown, the first permanent habitation of the English in America, and the site of the first christian temple, when "Virginia commenced her career of civilization with one of the most impressive solemnities of the Christian Church." All that we know of this clergyman, exhibits him as a man of a truly humble and peaceful spirit, and it is impossible to estimate now the value of the beneficent influence he exercised upon the fortunes of the colony. His kind offices as peace-maker were frequently interposed to harmonize differences, which would have been fatal to the colony; and his example of patience, in sickness, in poverty, and peril, often cheered his drooping companions, inspiring them with such fortitude, and stimulating them to such efforts as, with the blessing of Providence, enabled them to maintain their difficult position.

Of like spirit was the Rev. Mr. Whitaker, to whom was committed the care of the second Parish established in the colony, and who was called "the Apostle of Virginia." It was he who baptized Pocahontas and united her in marriage to Mr. Rolfe. Indeed, according to the admission of a strongly prejudiced historian, the ministers of that day were generally "pious missionaries, *of a temper and demeanor truly christian.*"

That in the progress of time many ministers, of a very different character, came into the colony, and that during the whole period of our colonial history there was much looseness of morals and laxity of discipline, we acknowledge with shame and confusion of face. But that these abuses cannot be imputed to the Episcopal system as an argument against that polity, is evident from the fact, that the Church had never been fully organized in this country. One of its indispensable elements was wanting; for although the Bishop of London was the nominal Diocesan, he did not exercise his Episcopal functions in Virginia. And it has been well said, that the "Episcopal Church without such an officer, is more likely to suffer for want of Godly discipline, than any other society of Christians, be-



cause all others have some substitute, whereas, our Church makes the office indispensable to some important parts of ecclesiastical government and discipline."

Again.—It has been made matter of reproach to the Episcopal Church, that she availed herself of the privileges conferred upon her by the State and denied them to others. The fact is admitted, but the inference drawn from the fact is as illogical as it is ungenerous. Nothing can be more fallacious and unjust, than to measure a past generation by the standard of a succeeding and more enlightened one, and to impute that, as a fault, to a system of polity which was the sin of the age. It should temper the severity of our judgments to remember, that however repugnant all this may be to our present notions, it was in entire accordance with the spirit of the age in which it was done. And that society of Christians, which has ever had it in its power to commit the same sin, and is innocent, is at perfect liberty to throw the first stone.

While offering this plea, not in justification of the policy alluded to, but in defence of that polity to which it is imputed as a sin, it is but just to notice several acts of humane and liberal legislation, which illustrate the genius of that system struggling with and occasionally triumphing over the superstition of the age. To say nothing of the protection extended to the refugees from the oppressions of Claiborne, who was hired by Cromwell for the holy work of rooting Popery and *Prelacy* from Maryland, we speak chiefly of the privileges conferred upon the French and German emigrants. The former of whom were located upon the Monecan lands, on the south side of James River, and formed into the Parish of King William, and the latter were settled on the Rappahannock, and composed the Parish of St. George. They were exempted from taxation, and permitted to employ their own minister, and worship God according to their own forms.

While we freely admit that there were many things in our colonial history to make a pious Episcopalian blush, yet it seems to us, that so far is this fact from furnishing a valid argument against the Episcopal regimen, it is an argument in its favor. The fact that it continued to exist under all the adverse influences to which it was exposed, from watchful foes without and treacherous friends within its fold; that with its defective organization, (having no earthly head,) it planted the Gospel in so many places, and kept up those forms of religion into which God has again breathed the breath of life, would seem to prove that there is something conservative in principles which thus survive the blighting frosts of winter, and bloom and bear again under the genial influence of the awakening spring.

Again.—It seems to us that that system could not have been intrinsically bad on whose bosom were nurtured the Washingtons, and the Henrys, and the Lees, and the Madisons, and the Pendletons, and the Masons, and the Randolphs, and most of those great men distinguished for the highest sanctity of character and splen-

dor of talent, who laid the foundations of our Government, and conducted our country to its present unexampled state of prosperity and glory.

And yet, in the face of facts like these, there are those who seem to think that there is something in our ecclesiastical polity adverse to the genius of a republican government. If such persons would take the trouble to compare the constitutions of the Church in the United States, and in the several Dioceses, with the constitutions of the United States and the several States of the confederacy, they would discover such a resemblance between them, as to make it evident, that the one was the model of the other.

Bishop Hobart and others have shown this at large, by running the parallel between them, not only as to general principles, but also in minute details. It is worthy of note, that of the present generation of Virginia, the Stevensons, the Leighs, the Scotts, the Moncures, the Thompsons, and many others, are direct descendants of the old Clergy, and there can no where be found more ardent admirers, or eloquent defenders of our republican system of government.\*

In fine, the Episcopal Church has not only survived these and a hundred other like popular prejudices, with which she has been assailed at every step of her progress, but by God's blessing upon the labors of her true-hearted Bishops, sustained by a band of clergymen sound in doctrine, exemplary in life, and flocks of noble laymen, zealous in good works, she is not only lengthening her borders and strengthening her stakes in our own land, but in the persons of her missionaries, her sound has gone out into all lands, and her words to the ends of the world. The light rekindled upon her altars, is reflected from the brazen walls of China and the burning sands of Africa:—it is playing amid the ruins of classic Greece and the mosques of the bigoted Mahomedan.

\*“There certainly was no State more forward in the war of the Revolution, and yet a large majority of its inhabitants were Episcopalians. Of the clergy, may be named Bishop Madison, Messrs. Bracken, Belmaine, Buchanan, Jarratt, Griffith, Davies, and others, who were decided partizans of the colonies. In one instance, a clergyman of Virginia, the Rev. Mr. Muhlenburg, accepted the commission of Colonel in the American army, reared a regiment among his own parishioners, and served through the whole of the war, from which he retired with the rank of Brigadier General. The Rev. Mr. Thruston also bore arms as a Colonel in the continental service. Of the laity, Washington, Henry, R. H. Lee, the mover of the Declaration of Independence, F. L. Lee, one of the signers, George Mason, Edmund Pendleton, Peter Lyons, Paul Carrington, William Fleming, with the families of the Graysons, Nelsons, Meades, Merccers, Harrisons, Randolphs, and hundreds of other names deservedly dear to Virginia.”

*Hawks.*

## S E R M O N .

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“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”—*John, I ch., 47 v.*

These words were spoken, by our Lord, of Nathaniel, and they describe a character of singular simplicity and beauty. Of this person not much is known; he is supposed, with good reason, to have been the same with Bartholomew, the Apostle, who, according to the best authorities, was also a martyr, sealing his testimony to Jesus with his blood. The narrative of his conversion, by St. John, though brief, is graphic, and brings to view those traits of his character which had attracted towards him the Saviour's kind regards, and which drew from our Lord the complimentary salutation of the text. From the hints in the Gospel, it seems likely that Nathaniel was one of those pious Jews who were waiting for the “consolation of Israel;” and it may have been, that when our Saviour saw him under the fig tree, he was engaged, as was the custom of his devout countrymen, in prayer, and perhaps in meditation, upon the coming of the Messiah. In this mood he was found by Philip, who said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Nathaniel at first doubted, asking, “can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, come and see;” and he went like an humble, single-minded man, sincerely desirous of knowing the truth. When Jesus saw him coming, he saluted him in the words of the text, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Nathaniel, surprised at the knowledge of his character displayed by one whom he had never seen, asked, “whence knowest thou me?” And when Jesus told him that he had seen him under the fig-tree, convinced, by these instances of the power of Jesus to see in secret, and to search the heart, that he was indeed the Messiah, he made the honest confession, “Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” Here, then, we have the character and some incidents

in the life of a man, of whom our Saviour expressed his approbation, and whom he deemed meet for the office of an Apostle.

Before the coming of Christ, notwithstanding the fact, that "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him," it is to be feared that there were but few among the people of the earth, "who worshipped God in spirit and in truth." The Heathen nations were gross Idolaters, having changed the truth of God into a lie, worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator. The peculiar graces of true religion were comparatively unknown among them. Patriotism, courage, and such shining qualities, were the objects of admiration; and their best men were remarkable for a pride and haughtiness of character, very inconsistent with the lowly virtues of humility and charity, which were represented even by their moralists, as being inconsistent with a great and noble character.

And even among the Israelites, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, there had been a sad departure from the simplicity of the faith, once delivered to the Saints, so that, when he who was an example of every grace of that religion, for which they were ready to die, "came unto His own, they received Him not." The Jewish Church at that time was divided into several sects, among which the Pharisees were most numerous, and held in highest repute by the people. These persons, under the garb of superior sanctity, unblushingly practised the greatest enormities. Their crying sins were pride, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy.

In the 23rd chapter of St. Matthew, our Saviour has drawn their portrait to the life, uttering such a blast of woes against them, as may well make the stoutest heart shudder, ending in that terrible climax, "Ye serpents, ye generations of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" A large portion of Christ's ministry was directed against these sins, and in favor of the opposite virtues of faith, sincerity, and humility, with the kindred graces of charity, meekness, and mercy.

In what striking contrast to his fearful denunciation of the hypocrite, are the opening words of his sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God."

The ears of the weary and the heavy-laden were never saluted with such sweet sounds before; they were like the soft airs of music, when the howling of the storm is hushed.

Again, what a rebuke to self-righteousness is the story of the Pharisee and the Publican. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the

other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus : God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor even as this Publican : I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other ; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

And then, what an affecting lesson of humility was taught by our Saviour, when there was a strife among his disciples which of them should be the greatest. "He called a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as this little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Such are the doctrines of our holy religion, as taught by Him, "who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth." In the same spirit was the teaching of the Apostles, exhorting christians to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and evil speakings, and as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby."

From this discussion, we learn in what true religion consists. It does not consist in being born in a christian land, though this is a great blessing, for which we should be devoutly thankful. It does not consist in being a partaker of the Holy Sacraments, though these are great privileges, and most efficacious means of grace to the faithful recipient. It does not consist in making boastful professions of faith, saying, with Pharisaic self-complacency, "I am holier than *thou*." We must "add to our faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity." These are marks by which a christian may as certainly be known as a tree is discerned by its fruit. But if any persons suppose that these fruits are indigenous in the human heart, or can be made to grow there by mere human culture, it would be a great mistake. Doubtless there are some persons in whom the elements are so kindly mixed, that they possess some of these dispositions in a large measure. They are honest, amiable, temperate, truthful, and to a certain extent, charitable. These dispositions often lead them to do many good deeds, which sometimes put to shame those who call themselves christians—but the characters of such persons are one-sided ; they lack some points, which are necessary to the true proportions of christian character, which, however weak some of its graces may be, is always symmetrical. These good deeds of worldly men, are not pleasant and acceptable to God, because they are done without a thought of Him. They proceed either from natural dispositions, and, in that case, have their reward in the reflex gratification they afford ; or they are done to be

seen of man, and, in that case, they have their reward. I would, by no means, speak disparagingly of the good deeds of those who are not christians. They are honorable; they are highly conservative in their influence upon the political, social, and domestic state; they do much to uphold, and beautify, and bless those institutions. Those who do them deserve and receive our esteem and applause, and this is their reward.

As water cannot rise above its own level, neither can good works have a higher reward than the motives from which they spring. The only works which are good in such a sense, as to be pleasant and acceptable to God, are those which are the effect of the foregoing and co-working grace of God; these, though they cannot put away our sins, nor endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are pleasant to, and will be graciously rewarded by Him, and they are the marks by which a christian is known as certainly as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

My hearers have anticipated me in the conclusion to which my remarks have tended. These reflections have seemed to me appropriate to the occasion, and I am confident that when I announced the text, you all felt the beauty of its application to our venerable friend, whose remains lie shrouded before us.

He was an Israelite indeed—an honest man—a sincere christian. He had none of the cant of the Pharisee, which saith I am holier than thou. He was humble as a little child—"in lowliness of mind esteeming others better than himself." He was no hypocrite: of him it might be said as truly as of any man I ever saw, in him is no guile. It do not say he was without guilt. He had, doubtless, many of those infirmities which are incident to the best specimens of regenerated humanity. I am too thoroughgoing a believer in the doctrine of human depravity, to put in the plea of not guilty for any man. I know of no other way of salvation than that which is revealed in the Gospel by grace through faith. And I have no confidence in any profession of faith which does not "work by love and purify the heart," and it is just because I believe our venerable friend answered these conditions, that I am encouraged to hope that he has reaped the blessing promised to the man "to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

*"Integer vitae, secleris que purus."*

In 1794, the Rev. Andrew Syme succeeded the Rev. Dr. Cameron as Rector of Bristol Parish,\* which office he held until 1839, when he resigned on account of the increasing infirmities of age, from the burden of which he has at last found repose in death.

No one has ever lived in this city who came into contact with society at so many

\* See the accompanying history of Bristol Parish for a biography of Mr. Syme.

points, and who sustained to its inhabitants so many and such interesting relations. For more than half a century he has been a citizen of this town, and for forty-five years the Rector of Bristol Parish. During all this time, he has been going in and out among several generations, in the daily performance of all the endearing offices of the sacred ministry. He has initiated into the Church of Christ, by holy baptism, many hundred persons, whose names are on the records of the church. I have also the names of nearly a thousand persons whom he united in the bonds of holy matrimony. How many he has visited in sickness—to how many he has ministered “the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ,” or rendered other offices incident to his high calling, there is no earthly record. Oh! how many scenes of sorrow and of gladness, in which our fathers, and our mothers, our brothers, and our sisters, were actors, has he not witnessed! He has been with them in their houses of mourning and in their halls of gladness. He has “wept with them when they wept, and rejoiced with them when they rejoiced.”

While we were permitted to gaze upon his venerable form, he was to us a memorial of other days, suggesting to our minds a thousand pleasant memories and holy associations. He stood between the living and the dead:—that last link between the past and the present is broken, and we, for the first time, realize the great gulph between us and the buried dead.

That this is no ordinary occasion, is indicated by the fact, that the whole city has poured out its population to form a procession that should do meet honor to the memory of one of its oldest and most venerable inhabitants, who, in the relations of Fellow-citizen, Preceptor, Pastor, “bore himself so meek,” that he had no enemy.

In this crowded assembly there are those with whom this should be a time of deep solemnity. The scene through which we are passing, is well fitted to call vividly to their minds events which, perhaps, had nearly, if not quite, faded from their memories.

There are many here whom, long time ago, he took in his arms and blessed, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and signing them “with the sign of the cross in token that hereafter they might not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.” There are those to whom he has often ministered “the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ,” with the prayer that their bodies might be made clean by Christ’s body, and their souls washed with his most precious blood.

There are many whom he joined together in holy matrimony, and for whom he prayed that they might “faithfully perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, and ever live in perfect peace and love together.”

There are those whom he visited in sickness, and with whom he prayed that God

would “restore them to health, and give them grace to lead the rest of their lives in his fear and to his glory.”

These, my friends, were no idle ceremonies, however lightly you may have regarded them. They were solemn transactions between God and your souls, of which both he and you will have to render an account at the bar of God. Your old pastor has already gone to give in his final report—perhaps he is even now rendering his account. Shall he say of any of you, they have erased the sign of the cross, and wiped the baptismal water from their brow; and of you, that you have trampled under foot the blood of the Everlasting Covenant; and of you, that you have torn to pieces and scattered to the winds your vows at the font, at the altar, in the chamber of sickness and affliction. God forbid that such a record should be made up in Heaven to day!—but may each one of you, moved by the holy associations which cluster around this solemn hour, and the impulses of that good spirit which has so long been striving with your consciences, resolve to be a christian without a moment's delay, that your names may this day be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. God grant it for Jesus Christ's sake, our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.



## THE HISTORY OF BRISTOL PARISH.

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Capt. John Smith, the first hero and historian of Virginia, in the narrative of his exploring adventures, speaks of the "pleasant river of Appamattuck," which is the first time this name occurs in history. The *Appomattox river*, at that time, was inhabited by a tribe of Indians of the same name, who composed a part of the hereditary dominions of Powhattan, one of the most powerful of the native chieftains. When Capt. Smith, (a captive,) was presented to Powhattan, at Werocomico, in 1610, the Queen of Appomattox was present, and was appointed to bring water to wash his hands, while another brought him a bunch of feathers, instead of a towel, to dry them. The wigwam of the Queen of the Appomattox, according to the chart in Smith's history, was on the north side of the river, between it and Randolph river, now known as Swift Creek, in the county of Chesterfield.

The Appamattuck Indians had also a town at the mouth of the river, which Sir Thomas Dale, to revenge some injuries inflicted by them upon the whites, assaulted and took in December, 1611.

Sir Thomas being of opinion, that it was an important point to be occupied by the English, established a settlement there, which he called New Bermudas. To this he annexed many miles of woodland in several Hundreds, called upper and lower Hundreds, Rochdale, Shirley, and Digges Hundreds. "At Bermudas, where there was the most corn ground, he first began to plant; and with a pale of two miles across from river to river, he enclosed and secured eight English miles in circumference. Upon this circuit there were soon built many fair houses to the number of fifty.\*

The next notice we have of the white man in this region of country, is in the account of the dreadful massacre of the colonists by the Indians in 1622, in which

\* See Stith, p. 124.

it is said that "five persons were slain on Master Pierce's plantation, on Appomattuck, five miles from the college."\*

For the next twenty years, nothing is known of the settlement upon the Appomattox, except that it increased rapidly in population, and was under the jurisdiction of the counties of Charles City and Henrico, two of the original shires of Virginia, which were on the western frontier of civilization.

In 1612, the Parish of Bristol was established by act of Assembly, "for the conveniency of the inhabitants on both sides of the Appomattuck river, being far remote from the Parish church on said plantation." The following are the boundaries of the Parish prescribed by act of Assembly: "To begin at Cawson's field within the mouth of the Appomattuck river, on the Eastern side, and at Powell's creek, on the Westward side of the river, and so extend up the river to the falls on both sides, and said Parish to be called by the name of Bristol."†

In 1615-6, the following act was passed by the House of Burgesses: "Be it enacted, for the defence of the inhabitants of the south side of James River, and the prevention of the great reliefe and subsistence to the Salvages by fishing in Bristol, alias Appomattuck river, as also for the cutting down their corn, or performing any other service upon them, that there be a ffort forthwith erected att the falls of the said Appomattuck river, nominated ffort Henry."‡ This fort was afterward granted, with 600 acres of land, to Capt. Abram Wood, upon the condition that he should keep and maintain ten men within it for three years.

In 1653-4, the inhabitants of Appomattuck were authorized to hold courts, to be kept by commissioners residing in the Parish of Bristol, appeals lying to Henrico and Charles City county courts, with authority also to treat with the Indians.§

In 1646, Col. A. Wood, and Mr. A. Wyatt, delegates to the Grand Assembly, from the Appomattuck country, presented a petition to the same, representing the inconveniences accruing to the inhabitants of the south side of James river from the courts being held on the north side. Accordingly, it was ordered that there be two courts kept in Charles City, one on the north, and the other on the south side of the river.

In 1661, the House of Burgesses passed an act for the building of a decent church, or chapel, in every Parish of this country. Where the original church of Bristol Parish was situated, is not now known. The extant records of the Parish only go back to the year 1720, eighteen years after the formation of the county of Prince George from Charles City.

At that time the meetings of the vestry were held, and divine service was per-

\* Henrico College.—*Smith*.

† 1st Henning.

‡ 1 H., 315.

§ Randolph MS.

formed, at the Ferry chapel, and at the Mother Church, alternately. I have not been able, after very diligent searching, to fix the site of either of the above churches. I am inclined to the opinion, that the "Mother Church" was on the north side of the river, at or near Bermuda Hundred, and the Ferry chapel, was probably so called from its vicinity to the ferry over the Appomattox, near Col. Byrd's store, established by act of Assembly in 1702.

1720. The earliest vestry meeting of which we have any record, was held at the "Ferry chapel" on the 30th of October, 1720, and consisted of the following persons :

REV. GEORGE ROBERTSON, Minister.

Major ROBERT BOLLING, Ch. Warden.

Major ROBERT MUNFORD,

Major WM. KENNON,

Capt. PETER JONES,

Capt. HENRY RANDOLPH,

A. HALL,

THOMAS BOTT.

LEWIS GREEN,

On the minutes of this vestry the following item occurs, which will amuse one of our modern choirs,

"Bristol Parish Dr. to Mr. Henry Tatem  
for setting the PSalms,  
500 pounds of tobacco."

In 1720, an act was passed by the House of Burgesses, for building a chapel in Bristol Parish.

At this time there were eight hundred and forty-eight tithables in the Parish, from which its population may be inferred, as all male persons of the age of sixteen and upwards, and all negro, mulatto, and Indian women of the same age, not being free, (except such as the vestry for charitable reasons might excuse,) were tithable according to law.

As an example of the duties done by the vestry in these good old times, I extract from their records the following order, dated June the 29th, 1724.

"In pursuance of an act of Assembly for the more effectual improvement of the staple of tobacco, it is ordered by the vestry, that the south side of the Parish be divided into precincts—viz: to begin at Appomattox ferry, thence along Moncks-neck road to Stony creek bridge, thence up Stony Creek to the upper road to Nottoway river, thence up between the same and Appomattox river to the extent of the Parish; Capt Peter Jones and his son William are appointed to count tobacco plants for said precinct. Thomas Bott is appointed counter on the north side of the precinct between Old Town creek and Appomattox. William Rowlett

between Old Town creek and Swift creek, and Wm. Chambliss between Swift creek and Henrico Parish."

In 1725, the population of the Parish having advanced towards the West, and settled upon and beyond Sapponey and Namorine creeks, Major R. Bolling and R. Munford were instructed by the vestry to contract for two chapels for the accommodation of the "*Frontier Inhabitants*" of the Parish. The committee agreed with Mr. James to build a chapel upon the upper side of Namozine creek, as near the river as it could be placed, for 135 pounds current money of Virginia, and with Mr. Colwell to build a chapel upon the land of John Stith, upon Sapponey, convenient to the upper Nottoway river road, for 140 pounds. These chapels were to be good, substantial frame buildings, forty by twenty feet, with good sills, and underpinned with block or rock stone; to be weather-boarded with good clap-boards and covered with shingles; the inside to be common plain work; the seats to be single benches, except the two upper pews, and these to be double with doors; each chapel to be sealed with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch plank; a common plain gallery, reading desk and communion table.

When these chapels had been finished according to contract, Major Wm. Kennon was directed to provide them with baptismal fonts, books and fitting ornaments.

In 1730, it was determined that an addition of twenty feet should be made to these chapels, and Mr. H. Boley contracted to build the addition to Sapponey chapel for 125 lbs., in tobacco, at the price the "London stores then gave." Major Wm. Kennon agreed to make the addition to the chapel at Namoseen on the same terms. During the same year it was resolved, in compliance with a petition from the remote inhabitants of the Parish, to build a chapel between Smaeks and Knibbs creek, under the direction of Major R. Bolling and R. Munford.

In ten years the population of the Parish had doubled; the number of the tithables in 1730, being sixteen hundred and forty-one.

In 1731 it was ordered by the vestry, that a ferry be kept at the Point, and that it be attended when the sermon is at the "Mother Church," and the minister pass when he hath occasion. From this, it would seem, that the "Mother Church" was on the north side of the river, as has been suggested.

As there was but one clergyman in the Parish, having the Mother Church and several chapels of ease under his care, at each of which he officiated in turn, lay-readers were provided in every congregation, with a salary, so that there should be no intermission in the regular services of the church.

In October 1732, the vestry, with an admirable zeal which prompted them to lose no time in providing church accommodations, commensurate with a rapidly increasing population, contracted with Mr. Richard Booker, gentleman, to build a chapel upon the land of Mr. Cobbs, on Flat creek, of the same dimension and style of workmanship with the chapel at Namoseen, for the ease of the upper in-

habitants of the Parish, and appropriated ninety-four pounds current money, to that end. This chapel was covered with tar, which seems to have been a fashionable substitute for paint in those primitive days. Mr. Booker was permitted to build a pew for his own family, at his own charge, on one side of the communion table.

In 1733, the church-wardens were directed by the vestry to examine into the condition of the chapel at the Ferry; and if in their opinion it was capable of being well repaired, they were instructed to employ workmen to do the same; otherwise, to report its condition to the vestry. There is no report from the church-wardens on record; but it is presumed, that their report was unfavorable to the reparation of the old chapel; because, at a meeting of the vestry soon afterwards, it was determined to build a new church of brick. Accordingly the church-wardens were instructed to purchase an acre of land, on Wells hill, of John Low, as a site for the new church. An advertisement was set up, inviting workmen to meet the vestry, at Thomas Hardaway's, on the 4th of May, to make proposals for building a church.

The vestry met the workmen at the time appointed, and agreed with Captain Thomas Ravenscroft,\* to build a church on Wells hill, for the sum of four hundred and eighty-five pounds, current money of Virginia.

According to the articles of agreement, the church was to be of brick, sixty by twenty-five feet in the clear—fifteen feet from the spring of the arch to the floor, which was to be eighteen inches at least above the highest part of the ground—three bricks thick to the water-table, and two and a half afterwards—the aisle to be six feet wide, and laid with white Bristol stone—a gallery at the west end, with a window in the same, as large as the pitch will admit—the floor to be well laid with good inch and a quarter plank—the pews to be framed, and the fronts raised a pannel and a quarter around—with a decent pulpit, and a decent rail around the altar-place, and a table suitable thereto, as usual—the roof to be covered with plank, and then shingled with good cypress heart shingles, cornice eaves, large board eaves, and suitable doors,—the whole to be done in the best plain manner, strong and workman like. Major Robert Bolling, Wm. Poythress and Wm. Starke, were deputed to superintend the building of this church.† The Governor of Virginia, for some reason which is not expressed, ordered the work to be suspended; which was accordingly done, until the Governor's pleasure should be known. The reasons for the Governor's proceedings in the premises, will probably appear in the

\* This gentleman was probably an ancestor of Bishop *Ravenscroft*.

† This was the northern front of the Blandford Church,—the southern wing was added afterwards.

following act of Assembly, passed in August 1736, and entitled an act for the relief of divers of the inhabitants of the Parishes of Raleigh and Dale. "Whereas, by two several acts of the General Assembly, made in the eighth year of his Majesty's reign, (George II.) the new Parishes of Raleigh and Dale were erected; the former to consist of a certain part of that portion of the Parish of Bristol, then lying in the county of Prince George, and part of the Parish of St. Andrew, then in the county of Brunswick; and the latter to consist of a certain part of the Parish of Henrico, in the county of Henrico, together with that part of the Parish of Bristol lying on the north side of the Appomattox river, in the county of Henrico; which first mentioned new Parish was to be separated from the Parish of Bristol, from and immediately after the twenty-fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-five, and the other new Parish was to be separated from the said Parishes of Bristol and Henrico, from and after the first day of May in that year; and whereas, after the passing of those acts of Assembly, and before the said new Parishes took place, the vestry of the Parish of Bristol, as it then stood undivided, did assess and levy upon all the tithable persons, in the parish, the sum of 12 pounds of tobacco per poll, towards the building of a new church, not before begun, or agreed for, in and for the use of the Parish of Bristol, as it now stands separated—which proceeding of the said vestry being very unreasonable,

"Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor, Council and Burgesses, of this present General Assembly, that the inhabitants of the present Parish of Bristol, do repay unto the vestries of the Parishes of Raleigh and Dale, respectively, so much tobacco as was assessed and levied upon the people of those parts of the former Parish of Bristol, as are now included in the said Parishes of Raleigh and Dale; and that the Parish do levy and order re-payment thereof in their next Parish levy."\*

The Parish of Bristol having refunded to the Parishes of Raleigh and Dale the tobacco which had been improperly levied upon them for building the new church in Bristol, it is presumed that the Governor revoked his order, and the church on Wells hill progressed to its completion.

† Such is the early history of the old brick church on Blandford hill. Blandford "has gone very much to decay, and is chiefly remarkable for the melancholy charm of a ruinous ivy-embroidered, moss-velveted, ante-revolutionary church, (whose yard is the Petersburg cemetery,) at present in the most picturesque phasis of dilapidation."†

The walls of this venerable edifice are still standing; but the roof is partly

\* The re-payment of this tobacco raised the levy from 26 to 43 pounds of tobacco per poll.

† Charles Campbell, in the Bland Papers.

gone, and creeping ivy is seen here and there, hiding with its mantle and its wreath, the ravages which time has made. Of the two pillars which support a beam near the middle aisle, one resting on its splintered end, is gradually yielding to the weight above. There is no vestige of pulpit or desk—one door remains but half-sustained by half a hinge. This venerable and melancholy church, brought in material from the fatherland, and reared when England's Monarch ruled "these shores, seems in its ruined state, best appropriated, as it is, to the appointments of the grave-digger:—where pews once stood, the spades and forms by which alone, and for all grades, the undertaker fashions alike the last mortal tenement, the black hand-barrow,—the wheelless vehicle of the grave, stand ready; and these are all the church now holds."\*

The following lines, composed during a meditation among the tombs which surround the Old Church, are printed not so much because the author thinks they possess much merit as poetry, as because they express feelings which beat at many hearts for utterance when they gaze upon that venerable pile.

Lone relic of the past! with awe profound  
 And unshod feet, I tread thy holy ground—  
 I tremble! By the carol of a bird,  
 The falling of a leaf, my soul is stirred;  
 A dreadful grandeur seems to shroud this place,  
 As tho' I heard God's voice, or saw his face!

Church of my sires! shrine of the sainted dead!  
 My heart doth bleed to see thee bow thy head:  
 One splintered column holding thee in air,  
 Like Jacob leaning on his staff in prayer,  
 And uttering blessings with his parting breath,  
 Ere he sank down into the dust of death.

And must thou fall, thou consecrated fane;  
 And shall no voice of prayer be heard again  
 Within thy courts, where oft, in by-gone days,

\* The above graphic description of the old church is from "Past Days," a little work by Miss ———; who, as well as Mr. Charles Campbell, quoted on the preceding page, have a genuine historical taste, loving what is old and innocent, with which the author of this tract most cordially sympathizes.

Our fathers worshipped God in hymns of praise,  
Breathing unto the majesty on high,  
The burning words of our old liturgy ?

Standing between the living and the dead,  
Who sleep beneath the sod on which I tread,  
In my fond fancy, thou dost seem to me  
The very type of fabled Niobe,  
Who, ancient story tells us, long ago,  
Did weep herself to stone in voiceless woe !

More costly temples may around thee rise,  
To pierce, with taper pinnacles, the skies ;  
Gorgeous with glittering dome and sculptured towers,  
As if the stone had bloomed in giant flowers ;\*  
And yet not one of these has charms for me,  
Like thy mossed-roof and green embroidery !

On the 13th of August, 1737, the vestry met at the Brick Church for the first time. The following persons were present :

COL. ROBERT BOLLING.  
CAPT. ROBERT MUNFORD.  
CAPT. WILLIAM STARKE.  
CAPT. DAN'L WALKER.

CAPT. JOHN BANNISTER.  
MAJOR WM. POYTHRESS.  
CAPT. FRANCIS POYTHRESS.

In May, 1738, Messrs. Bannister, Munford, Hamlin and Poythress, were appointed to choose a site for a chapel on Hatcher's run, and in the following summer a contract was made with Mr. Isham Eppes for building a chapel on the land of Allen Tye, on the northern side of Hatcher's run, for which he was to receive one hundred and nineteen pounds. This chapel was soon afterwards burned down :— it was rebuilt in 1740.

On the 23rd of October, 1739, Messrs. Bolling, Poythress and Eppes, were instructed to choose a site for a chapel in the lower part of the Parish. These gentlemen made a contract with John Ravenscroft to erect a chapel on Jones' Hole Creek, for which he received 134 pounds 10 shillings.

\* Dr. Scahff, in his Principles of Protestantism, calls the cathedrals giant "stone-flowers."



The Rev. George Robertson, who had been the incumbent of the parish for more than twenty years, having died some time in 1839, the Rev. Richard Heartswell was elected to succeed him. Some misunderstanding having arisen between this gentleman and the Vestry, touching the terms of their contract, he was discharged on the following day, the Vestry having resolved that Mr. Heartswell should not be the minister of the Parish on the original terms of the contract, nor on "*any other terms whatsoever.*"

The vacancy in the Parish, in the mean time, was supplied by the Rev. Mr. Stith, formerly of William and Mary College, who was sojourning at Varina, engaged in the composition of his History of Virginia.

On the 26th of March, 1740, the Rev. Robert Ferguson was chosen minister of the Parish, and John May was chosen Secretary of the vestry.

In December, 1741, the vestry, for the first time, purchased a glebe, consisting of two hundred acres of land, with the necessary appurtenances for a private dwelling, for which they gave the sum of two hundred pounds in current money. Hitherto an allowance of 4000 pounds of tobacco had been made to the minister instead of a glebe, to which he was entitled by law.

In 1742, the following act was passed by the General Assembly,

"Whereas, by reason of the great extent of the Parish of Bristol, the minister and inhabitants thereof labor under many inconveniences, for removal of which for the future; Be it enacted, that from and after the 1st day of September next, the said Parish of Bristol, shall be divided by a line, to begin at Major James Munford's mill on Appomattox river, and running thence a course parallel to the lower line of said Parish to Stony creek—and thence down the said creek to Surry county, and all that part of the said Parish situated below said line, be erected into one distinct Parish, and retain the name of Bristol, and all the other part thereof situated above the said line, be erected into one other distinct Parish, and called by the name of Bath." Some difficulties having arisen between the two Parishes in consequence of this division it was ordered by the vestry of Bristol, that a representation of the unequal division of the two Parishes be made ready to be certified at the next court, to be held for certifying propositions and grievances to the next General Assembly, and that Col. Robert Bolling and Mr. Theodorick Bland attend the house on the part of this Parish. This case came before the General Court, and was finally settled by an act of Assembly in 1744, reannexing a part of the Parish of Bath to Bristol, and making the line between them run from Appomattox River on the east side of Wallace's Creek south to Surry County. Messrs. Bolling and Bland were also instructed to petition the Assembly for an act directing the sale of a glebe in the Parish of Dale, which had been purchased by the Parish of Bristol before its division, and that Bristol Parish should be paid its proportion

of the money arising from such sale, and that the church ornaments of velvet, fringed with gold, and silk, and such plate as has the name of Bristol thereon, now in possession of the Parish of Dale, be returned to the Parish of Bristol. Accordingly, in 1747, the General Assembly passed an act directing the sale of the glebe, in Dale, and the division of the proceeds between the parishes of Dale and Bristol.

As another example of the duties devolved by law upon the vestries of this era, I take from the church record the following orders, dated 1747 :

“ Ordered, that John May and John Edwards procession from Indian Town run to the Parish line. Robert Birchett and Thomas Cheves between Black Water Swamp and Second Swamp. John Peterson and Samuel Jordan from Puddledock Run to Nottoway Road. William Batte, Jr., and Drury Thweat from Parish line to Nottoway Road. James Sturdivant and John Gilliam from Puddledock Run to City Run.”

Our history has now reached the year 1748, in which the towns of Petersburg and Blandford were established by act of Assembly, upon the lands of William Poythress and Abraham Jones.

1749. During the past year the Rector of the Parish, the Rev. Robert Ferguson, died and was succeeded by the Rev. Eleazar Robertson.

The following persons composed the vestry, which met at the Old Brick Church, on the 22nd of June, 1752, and contracted with Col. Richard Bland to build an addition to the church for 400 pounds current money of Virginia.

This addition was ordered at first to be made on the south side of the church. At a subsequent meeting of the vestry, it was determined that it should be made on the north side. The contract with Mr. Bland specified that it should be thirty feet by twenty-five in the clear, and fifteen feet from the spring of the arch to the floor—three bricks thick to the water-table, and two and a half feet to the plate, the roof to be framed as the present roof. The aisle to be six feet, laid with white Bristol stone—two windows of the same dimensions as the present, on each side of the addition, and glazed with sash glass—the floor to be laid with inch and a quarter heart plank—the pews to be framed as those now in the church—the roof to be first covered with plank, and then shingled with cypress heart shingles—cornice same as in the present church—square ceiling, &c. The whole to be done in the best plain manner, strong and workmanlike, and to be finished on the 1st day of July, 1751.

It was also ordered at this meeting, that the church should be enclosed with a brick wall one and a half brick thick—five feet from the highest part of the ground to the top of the coping,—length from east to west 160 feet—from north to south 140 feet in the clear—one gate at the west end, and one on the south side of the church.

This is the present inner wall, crumbling in ruins in some places, and covered with vines and running briars. Permission was granted to James Murray, Alexander Bolling, and Theodorick Bland, to build a gallery in the addition, at their own expense, for the use of themselves, their successors, and heirs for ever. It was also agreed that the addition to the church should be built of bricks of statute size, once primed, and twice painted.

On the 18th of Nov., 1753, the Rev. Thomas Wilkinson was elected minister of the parish, in place of the Rev. Eleazar Robertson. In the Bland Papers, edited by Mr. Charles Campbell, I find a letter written at York, in 1754, signed T. P., and addressed to William Beverly, Esq., speaking of this gentleman in very flattering terms. The letter, it seems, was in answer to an inquiry about the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson's standing among his former parishioners. This inquiry was suggested by a discreditable report which had been put in circulation about this reverend gentleman. Mr. Beverly's correspondent pronounces Mr. Wilkinson to be entirely innocent of the charge, and adds, "I can assure you they have got in him an innocent, inoffensive good man, that will never create any difference or trouble among them, but will endeavor to the utmost of his power to cultivate friendship, good neighborhood, and unanimity among his flock—and if they be a reasonable people, the more and longer they know him, the more and more they will esteem him."

In Nov., 1754, leave was given to Col. William Poythress to enclose a piece of land for a burying place for his family within the walls of the church-yard, upon the condition that he enlarge the same, so that it should enclose the same superficial measure as the present yard.

In 1757, Stephen Dewey, Alexander Bolling, Theodorick Bland, and William Eaton, were appointed to confer with committees of the Parishes of Martin's Brandon and Bath, to devise measures for alleviating the condition of the poor in these several parishes. The joint committee, after due deliberation, upon the unhappy condition of many poor orphans, and other poor children of their several parishes, whose parents were unable to give them any education, and being desirous that such poor children should be brought up in an industrious and religious course of life, so as to become useful members of the community, resolved to earnestly recommend to their several vestries that they should join a petition to the General Assembly, to procure an act to enable the said parishes to erect a free school for the education of the free children of their respective parishes, and for perfecting so useful and charitable a work, they propose that the said vestries should open a subscription, that the rich and all other well-disposed persons may have an opportunity of contributing of that store, which the Father of bounties hath bestowed upon them.

1762, November 22. The vestry, composed of the following persons, viz:

Theophilus Field, James Boisseau, Alexander Bolling, James Murray, Roger Atkinson, S. Gordon and George Smith, assembled at the house of Mrs. Walter Boyd, in Blandford. The Rev. Thomas Wilkinson tendered his resignation as Rector of the Parish; and the Rev. William Harrison was elected to succeed him. Sir William Skipwith and Alexander Bolling were appointed to run the line between the Parishes of Martin's Brandon, and Bristol, according to an act of Assembly, which prescribed that the said Parishes should be divided by Lawson's creek, on Appomattox river, until it meets with the line dividing the lands of Theodorick Bland and William Gibbs,—and thence by a line south to Sussex county.

In 1769, an act of Assembly was passed, directing the sale of the glebe of Bristol Parish, containing 192½ acres, on account of the inconveniences of its location. In the following year, the vestry made an order for the sale of the glebe in pursuance of the foregoing act of Assembly; and on the 21st of March, 1771, they executed a deed for the same to Wm. Brown. The church wardens were instructed to pay the Rev. Mr. Harrison twenty-six pounds per annum in lieu of a glebe, until a new one should be provided; which was done in October, 1772, when the vestry purchased 490 acres of land from Mrs. Eliza Yates, for which they gave the sum of 350 pounds. In the following year they erected a dwelling-house, with all the necessary appurtenances, upon the glebe.

We have now arrived at a period when the Church began to feel the effect of the storm, which had been for some years brewing in the political horizon, and which was soon to burst upon the country; and stripping the Church of the privileges which she had enjoyed by virtue of her unnatural alliance with the State, leave her to weep for some years in the dust of humiliation; from whence, when her days of mourning were ended, she arose, and putting on her beautiful garments, returned to her only lawful Lord, and again looked forth upon the world "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

For some years there had been a growing disaffection to the mother country, which had tended to alienate many persons from the Church, which had so long enjoyed bounties from the State, at the expense of other Christian Societies. Many of the clergy, who had been born in England, and who had been taught to regard the Church and State as identical, and whose interests were all intimately bound up with the existing order of things, had but little sympathy with the rising spirit of the Revolution, and thus became objects of popular odium. Other christians very naturally availed themselves of this state of things, to involve both Church and State in one common ruin. Indeed, the great body of Episcopalians, with many of the clergy, sympathized so thoroughly with the prevailing popular sentiment, that they became lukewarm in support of their own Church, which had become so

identified in popular opinion with the British government. Under the influence of these considerations, the Church was so crippled in her resources, as already to totter to her fall.

Accordingly we find in the records of this æra, the following entry upon the minutes of the vestry :

1775, October 19th. "Whereas the calamitous state of the country renders it doubtful, whether a sufficient sum can be collected from the people for the payment of the parochial debt in money, and by the restraints laid upon exports by public consent, the parishioners are precluded of the election which the law had given them, of paying their dues in money or tobacco. It is determined by the vestry that the minister's salary shall be estimated at one hundred and forty-four pounds, to be collected as nearly as possible in money, unless the prohibition on exports should be removed. In that case, the people shall be at liberty to pay in tobacco, at eighteen shillings per hundred, in lieu of money, according to their own choice. And it is further to be understood, that the Rev. Mr. Harrison shall wait for the balance after the collections are made, three years, without interest, unless it should please Heaven, before that time, to put an end to the troubles of our country ; and then it is understood, that the incumbent's salary shall be demandable in the usual way.

(Signed,)

WM. CALL, }  
PETER JONES, } *Church Wardens."*

In 1776, an act of Assembly was passed, repealing all laws of Parliament requiring conformity to the Protestant Episcopal Church, and exempting dissenters from contributing to its support. This measure was advocated by Mr. Jefferson, and warmly resisted by Messrs. Nicholas and Pendleton—the former representing the views of the dissenters generally, and the latter expressing the sentiments of the Episcopalians and Methodists.

In 1779, a proposition for a general assessment for the support of the clergy of all Protestant denominations was rejected, and the last remnant of the establishment was put down.

In the following year, the Rev. Mr. Harrison resigned his charge. This gentleman continued to reside in Petersburg until the 20th of November, 1814, when he departed this life, in the 84th year of his age. He was buried at his residence in Petersburg, now occupied by Mr. Maghee :—a tomb-stone marks the spot, on which is an inscription, which will be found in the appendix, among a number of epitaphs upon persons, who were once active members of this Parish.

In 1781, a bill was enacted by the Legislature, entitled a bill establishing a provision for teachers of the Christian Religion. This bill was earnestly supported by Patrick Henry. The Episcopal Church immediately applied for an act of incorporation. Accordingly a bill for the incorporation of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was introduced by Mr. Henry, and passed. By this bill all former laws for the government of the Church were repealed; and the minister and vestry of each Parish were constituted a body politic, and were authorized to hold all glebe lands, churches, burying-grounds, plate, books, ornaments, and every thing which had been the property of the late established Church.\*

On the 17th of March, 1784, the Rev. Dr. Cameron and the Rev. Mr. Kennedy were nominated to the vestry, who chose Dr. Cameron Rector of the Parish.

1785. In pursuance of the act of Assembly, incorporating the Church, an election of vestrymen and trustees was held on the 28th of March, when the following gentlemen were chosen—

JNO. BANNISTER,	RICHD. TAYLOR, -	CHRIST. MECONNICO,
RT. BOLLING,	JOS. JONES,	ISAAC HALL,
JAMES FIELD,	WM. ROBERTSON,	A. G. STRACHAN,
R. TURNBULL,	M. RAINES,	JNO. BAIRD.

In 1786, the law incorporating the Church was repealed, with a proviso saving to all religious societies their property in their respective churches, and authorizing the appointment of trustees for its management; and the act of 1788 declared that these trustees should be considered, to all intents and purposes, the successors to the former vestries, with the same power of holding and managing the property vested in them.

Vestrymen and trustees were regularly elected in Bristol Parish under these acts.

On the 1st of June, 1790, Wm. Robertson, Robert Bolling, John Grammer, and others, were appointed a committee to choose a site for a new church, and make an estimate of the cost of building it. This committee reported, that a lot near Bollingbrook Warehouse was the most proper situation for the new church. Mr. R. Bolling being present, generously offered the same for the purpose, but afterwards another lot was purchased.

In 1791, Messrs. Williams, Robertson and Hardaway, were appointed a committee for viewing and reporting the value of the glebe belonging to this Parish.

1792. Bishop Madison, who had been consecrated in 1790, made his first visit to this Parish. It was the first Episcopal visit with which the Parish had been favored since its establishment in 1642. It was, of course, an event of great in-

\* See Acts of Assembly, and Hawks' Church History.

terest to the friends and members of the church, and we cannot but be amused in looking back through half a century at the ceremonial of the occasion. Messrs. Bolling, Shore, and Campbell, were appointed to draw up a suitable address to be presented to the Bishop at his visitation, and the Rev. Mr. Cameron was authorized to procure a singing master to attend on the occasion.

The Rev. Dr. Cameron, who had been officiating alternately at the Brick Church and at the new building, in town, intended for a Court House, with an occasional visit to the "outer church," resigned his charge in 1793. On which occasion, the following resolution was entered upon the minutes of the vestry :

*Resolved unanimously,* That the Church Wardens be requested to furnish the Rev. Dr. Cameron with a certificate expressing the thanks of the vestry for the fidelity with which he discharged the duties of his office as Rector of this Parish, and that his conduct and conversation during that time have been, in the highest degree, pious and exemplary." It is to be regretted, that so little is known of many excellent men, who deserve to be held in remembrance. A few facts in relation to Dr. Cameron, have been gleaned from the journals of the Convention.

In 1790, Dr. Cameron preached the Convention sermon. A resolution, thanking Dr. Cameron for his judicious, affectionate, and seasonable discourse, was passed by the Convention, which also asked a copy of the sermon for publication. An inspection of the journals shows Dr. Cameron to have been an active and efficient member of the Convention. He served on many important committees while a member of that body, and among others, he was chairman of the committee appointed by the Convention to prepare a memorial to the Legislature asserting the right of the Church to the glebes.

In 1789, a canon was passed laying off the Diocese into districts, consisting of several adjacent Parishes, and directing the clergy of each Parish to assemble annually in Presbytery, and elect one of their number to preside in these meetings, with the title of Visitor, whose duty it was to visit each Parish in his district, to see that the canons of the church were observed, to inspect the morals of the clergy, reprove those who were negligent, and report the state of each Parish in his district to the Bishop, or Convention. Under this canon, Dr. Cameron was appointed visitor of the Parishes of Martin's Brandon, Albemarle, Bristol, Bath, Dale, and Manchester. It was in this Presbytery, that the first motion for the formation of a society for the relief of the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen originated, along with a proposition for the instruction of students in divinity.

In 1816, Bishop Moore, in his address to the Convention, speaks of the death of Dr. Cameron in the following words of commendation, "The venerable Dr. Cameron, a clergyman of a dignity of deportment becoming his standing and years, has been taken from our embrace. His little flock has been called to part with their

beloved pastor, and his widow and children with a husband and father endeared to them not only by the ties of nature, but by the faithful and honorable discharge of all the duties of life. He died resigned to the will of Heaven, and has entered into the joy of his Lord."

On the 20th of January, 1794, the Rev. Andrew Syme was elected Rector of the Parish in place of Dr. Cameron, resigned.

In 1799, an act was passed by the Assembly, stripping the Church of all her property, the title to which had been acknowledged and confirmed to the Church by successive Legislatures since the Revolution; and in 1801-2, an act was passed appropriating to the poor of the Parish all the glebe lands, as they should become vacant by the death of the present incumbents. The church edifices, yards, plate, with private donations made before 1777, where there was any person in being entitled to hold property, under the original donors, were saved from this confiscation.\*

1802, 19th of June. At a meeting of subscribers to a fund for building a new church in the town of Petersburg, seven commissioners were appointed to "choose and purchase a site for the church," "collect subscriptions," &c. These commissioners soon reported, that they had purchased a lot and commenced the erection of an edifice, upon which they had expended \$5,809, (1,800 of which had been raised by a lottery under an old Act of Assembly,) and that \$3,400 were still needed to finish the building. In January, 1806, the Commissioners reported that, according to the instructions of the subscribers, they had contracted with Mr. Brough to complete the building for the sum of \$3,000; for the payment of which debt they had borrowed and paid to Mr. B. \$2,075; leaving \$925 still due. After the church was finished, the pews were rented for three years and the money paid in advance, which produced the sum of \$3,213, with which the borrowed money was repaid; leaving a small surplus on hand. The Commissioners, according to the instructions of the subscribers, conveyed the title to the property to trustees for the use of the Protestant Episcopal inhabitants of the town of Petersburg, and, (with the approbation of the trustees,) of any other Christian minister, occasionally, when not occupied by the resident Episcopal minister. The minister and parishioners of Bristol deserve much commendation for their zeal in building and paying for a new church edifice, at a time when the church in this Diocese was so depressed and disheartened.

The interval between 1800 and 1814 has been well called the dark day of the Church. From 1805 to 1814, the Church had not life enough to bring its members into Convention. To the honor of Bristol Parish, it should be known, that the Church lived through this dark day, never being without a minister or vestry, and

\* See laws of Virginia, and Hawks' history, in which this whole subject is most luminously exhibited.



scarcely ever omitting to appoint delegates to the Convention, even in those years when no convention was held.

1814. On the 28th of December, the new church was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. R. C. Moore, who at the same time confirmed twenty-five persons: Bishop Moore had himself been consecrated in May, 1814, as Diocesan of Virginia. This was probably the second church consecrated by him;—the first having been the Monumental Church in Richmond. From 1814 to 1834, the Rev. Mr. Syme continued, without assistance, punctually to discharge the functions of Rector of the Parish. During that time, there are but few entries upon the Parish records, other than the annual election of vestrymen, and such arrangements as were necessary to keep the Parochial system of the Church in operation.

There are, however, a few items of intelligence, which have some interest in themselves, and are necessary to a complete history of the Parish.

In 1816, Messrs. Bolling, McKenzie and Grammer, were appointed to ascertain who were the proprietors of the lands adjacent to the church on Blandford hill, and the most advisable means of procuring an addition of from four to six acres to the burying-ground.

During the above mentioned period, according to Mr. Syme's annual report to the Diocesan Convention, the condition of the Parish, from a variety of causes, was not at all prosperous. There was a gradual, but small improvement in its condition, the number of communicants having increased from forty, in 1821, to fifty in 1830, and to seventy in 1834. The history of the Parish during this period was not altogether barren of interesting incidents, nor of spiritual fruits. Among the incidents to be remembered, were two visitations of the Parish by Bishop Moore—one in 1824, when the Bishop was attended by the Rev. Dr. Wilmer, and admitted to the order of Deacon, Messrs. John Cook and Lucius Carter; the other in 1826, when Messrs. John Grammer, B. O. Peers, Henry Aisquith, and Leonard H. Johns, were ordained to the same degree in the holy ministry. On this occasion, the Rev. Dr. Ducachet was present and officiated. The fact that the church in Petersburg survived the spiritual drought of this trying season, is not the least among the evidences that she was not of man's planting. Among the spiritual fruits attesting her vitality, were the existence and good works of a small band of pious females, who projected and kept steadily in operation an education and a missionary society, the former of which rendered very efficient aid to the theological seminary of the Diocese, and the latter employed several missionaries to labor in the "region round about."

The Rev. John Grammer and the Rev. John Cole were, at one time, in the service of this society. Mr. Syme, in his official communications, frequently spoke in terms of warm commendation of the works of faith and labors of love of these

excellent ladies, who watched and waited in the courts of the Lord's house, when the fire upon the altar burned low, and the glory above the mercy seat had almost departed. The writer of this sketch would take pleasure in adding his tribute of gratitude, by giving their names a conspicuous place in this history, were he not fearful of shocking the sensitiveness of living worth, which shrinks from the world's notice, preferring the reward promised to those who do not let their left hands know what their right hands do, to the alms of public applause.

In 1834, Mr. Syme, in his report to the Convention, says, "the incumbent being far advanced in life, the congregation, with great liberality, have adopted means to support an assistant. A young clergyman, from New York, has been engaged for the purpose; he is very acceptable to the people, and it is hoped, by the blessing of God, much good will result to all concerned." This young clergyman from New York was the Rev. Hobart M. Bartlett, who acted as the assistant minister of this Parish until the spring of 1839. Mr. Bartlett was a young gentleman of very sprightly talents and popular address, and rendered very efficient aid to Mr. Syme in building up the congregation from its former state of depression to one of comparative prosperity. In the minutes of the vestry, is recorded a grateful acknowledgment of his services, by those who felt that they had been a blessing to them. He, as well as the venerable Rector, has since gone down to his grave, followed by the kindly thoughts of many surviving friends, who would throw the mantle of charity over their faults, and cherish only the memory of their virtues.

The Rev. A. Syme was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, in the year 1755. He sailed from Greenock, on the 10th of February, 1790, and after a tempestuous voyage of three months, landed in the United States, at Tappahannock, to fulfil an engagement as teacher in the families of Messrs. Ritchie and Brockenbrough, the fathers of Mr. Thomas Ritchie and Dr. Brockenbrough, the former the present editor of the "Union," and the latter, the late President of the Bank of Virginia. His credentials show that he was ordained deacon by Bishop Madison, in the Parish Church in Williamsburg, on the 20th of March, 1791, (the 2nd Sunday in Lent,) and to the office of the Priesthood at the same place, by the same prelate, on the 4th of March, 1792. After his ordination, he took charge of South Farnham Parish, in the county of Essex, which he represented in the Conventions of 1792 and 1793.

The writer of this sketch recently addressed a letter to Mr. Thomas Ritchie, who had been one of Mr. Syme's favorite pupils in Essex, asking for some information about Mr. Syme while he resided in Essex. Mr. Ritchie very politely forwarded this letter to Dr. John Brockenbrough, who was so obliging as to send the author a communication, from which the following very interesting extract is taken:

“Such information as I possess, I take pleasure in communicating, especially as I entertained for Mr. Syme’s character sentiments of great respect and veneration. In the year 1789, Mr. Hay, afterwards an Episcopal minister in Halifax county, was engaged in Aberdeen by the Rev. Mr. Cruden, (who had been pastor in my native Parish, in the county of Essex, before the Revolutionary war,) to come to Virginia as a teacher in the families of my father and Mr. Ritchie. When Mr. Hay’s term expired, it being the preference of the times to employ teachers from Scotland, my father requested his friend, Mr. James Dunlop, of Glasgow, to employ another gentleman to take the place of Mr. Hay, and Mr. Dunlop made an engagement with Mr. Syme, who arrived in the United States, in the year 1790. Before his arrival, I had been entered as a student at the Fredericksburg Academy, then in high repute, under the Rev. Mr. Ryan, an eminent classical scholar, and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. Having finished my studies at that academy, I returned home, in 1790. From that period until I left the country for Edinburgh, in 1792, I had daily intercourse with Mr. Syme, and derived no little improvement from the association. We often read together portions of the Latin Classics, and other works of literature, particularly the British Periodicals, (which my father regularly imported,) in which Mr. Syme took great delight. He was a most agreeable inmate, and much esteemed and valued by my parents; and was, to all intents and purposes, a member of the family.

“While he had charge of this small and private school, he was, at all proper seasons, preparing himself for his ordination, having studied Divinity to become a member of the Presbyterian church; and I distinctly remember a conversation between him and Bishop Madison at my father’s house, sometime before his ordination, on the tenets of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches, in which they both came to the conclusion, that the main difference with the liberal members of each consisted in the form of Church Government. Soon after Mr. Syme’s return from Williamsburg, where he had been ordained, I heard him preach his first sermon at Piscataway church, where there was an immense congregation, (of the different sects,) and he gave great satisfaction, I may say joy, to the Episcopalians, who had been without a pastor from the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, and I can never forget the number of children who were brought to the parson to be baptized.”

In 1794, Mr. Syme succeeded the Rev. Dr. Cameron as Rector of Bristol Parish. On the 27th of July, 1806, he married Jean, the daughter of Dr. Cameron, then Rector of Cumberland Parish, in Lunenburg county.

For forty-five years, he continued to be the Rector of this Parish, until 1839, when he resigned, on account of the increasing infirmities of age. During these many years, he not only performed all the duties of the pastoral office, but he kept

a school, in which were educated a large proportion of the citizens of Petersburg, of both sexes. It is difficult to find a native of Petersburg, or of its vicinity, who has not come into contact with this venerable man, in some of the relations in which he ministered to the temporal or spiritual well-being of the people, all of whom, with one voice, bear witness to the transparent candor of his mind, and the beautiful amenity of his manners, and unite in the testimony, that he was 'an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.'

After his resignation, he continued to reside in Petersburg, gradually declining under the weight of years, until he found repose in death.

His death created a deep feeling throughout the whole community, which was attested by the fact, that although his funeral took place in the week, it was the very largest ever seen in the town of Petersburg, whose whole population, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, seemed to turn out to follow in procession the venerable man, upon whom they had been so long accustomed to look with feelings of reverence and regard, and as though they scarce could realize that he who, in his official capacity, had 'put so many under his feet,' pronouncing over them the words, 'dust to dust,' was himself mortal, and was obliged to have the same office done for him.

Conspicuous in this procession, was the order of free masons, of which Mr. Syme had long been the chaplain. After the services of the Church had been concluded at the grave, the masons surrounded it, to pay to their venerable chaplain, in the language of the craft, the "Grand Honors." Previous to which, Mr. R. K. Meade made an appropriate address, from which the following is an eloquent extract :

"BRETHREN,—The grave has triumphed, and a member of the ancient order of free masons lies beneath the cold sod. Earth claims his mouldering remains, and Heaven receives his immortal spirit. And who, my brethren, has left us? Whose departure, on this long journey, has robed the craft in mourning, and announced the long, long farewell! A beloved brother, our old and venerable chaplain, who has labored long in the temple, and now that the trials of his probationary state are over, enters into the 'temple and city of his God.' Many long and weary years have passed since our lamented friend, in being raised to the sublime degree of a master mason, heard the admonitory words, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' They sank deep into his soul, and seizing the working tools of a master mason, he spread far and wide the cement of brotherly love and affection. Our venerable chaplain has left us before the temple is finished; but we shall still hear the echo of his voice in its

halls, and the memory of his bright example shall be as the 'dew of Hermon, and the precious ointment upon the head.' His spirit shall animate us in our labors; and when we call from labor to refreshments, his memory shall bless them. May all of us, my brethren, be as happy as our departed friend, who, bowed down by years and toil, but clothed in righteousness, will appear before the Supreme Architect of the Universe, and hear the words of victory and eternal life, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Brethren, the decayed and deserted tabernacle which lies before us, may draw a tear from the eye of sympathy; but it should remind us of that last and fearful struggle between Heaven and earth, in which the immortal spirit, bursting from its frail shell of mortality, must either wing its flight to realms of eternal peace, or, sinking under the weight of accumulated sin and filth, may have reason to covet the fate of the vile dust, which constituted its earthly home. To prepare the brotherhood for this struggle, you remember how often the voice of our deceased friend has been raised in fervent prayer, and how unequal he has represented it, if we should go into the conflict without being properly armed. Armed with the tenets of our order, brotherly love, relief, truth, temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice,—armed with these weapons, and *aided by those lessons*, which he taught from the sacred desk, we may, like our lamented brother, triumph over the last enemy of man, and secure admittance into that 'temple not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.' "

But I have anticipated the regular course of my narrative. To return to the point of departure.

October 17th, 1837. The vestry, after due deliberation, determined that the interests of the church, and the convenience of those attending public worship therein, render it expedient to accept the offer of \$4,000, made by the Common Hall of the town of Petersburg, for the lot and appurtenances at present occupied as a place of worship by the Protestant Episcopal Church in this Parish.

The Rev. A. Syme, Messrs. R. Bolling and Wm. Corling, the surviving trustees of the church property, were authorized to convey the same to the mayor and members of the Common Hall, and it was ordered that the proceeds of the sale should be deposited with Mr. R. Bolling, subject to the order of the vestry.

The new church was consecrated by Bishop Moore, on the 5th of April, 1839.

On the 11th of May, Messrs. C. F. Osborne, J. McFarland, and Dr. Stockdell, were appointed a committee to wait upon the Rt. Rev. William Meade, the assistant bishop of Virginia, and invite him to become the Rector of the parish. Bishop Meade promised to confer with the bishop and clergy at the approaching convention, at Norfolk, and with their approbation, to accept the invitation. After the

Convention, Bishop Meade, at the close of a sermon, preached in St. Paul's Church, announced his acceptance of the invitation, and in a few weeks entered upon his duties as pastor of Bristol Parish.

On the 7th of June the Bishop called the vestry and recommended that as early a call as possible should be given to the Rev. Mr. Cobbs to become the permanent pastor of the church. Whereupon the bishop was authorized to wait upon Mr. Cobbs and inform him, that it was the unanimous wish of the vestry that he should become the Rector of Bristol Parish. Mr. Cobbs having agreed to become the permanent pastor of the church, Bishop Meade felt himself at liberty to resume his Episcopal functions, which he accordingly did, after officiating as pastor for six weeks.

Bishop Meade's ministry, in Petersburg, is believed to have been attended with the happiest effects in harmonizing whatever of discordant elements there may have been in the congregation, and reuniting them in the bands of Christian love. He himself alludes to his brief charge in Petersburg, in his report to the Convention of 1840, in the following words :

“ After the Convention in Norfolk, I took temporary charge of the church in Petersburg, where I spent six weeks amidst a most affectionate and interesting congregation, to whom I became very tenderly attached, and unto some of whom I am not without hope God's word was blest. I confirmed 15 persons, admitted 20 to the communion, and baptized 27 children, during my stay there. It was a matter of great comfort to my mind, to be able on leaving them, to announce to the congregation the acceptance of a call to the Parish of the Rev. Mr. Cobbs, who has since entered on the duties of his charge, and will, I hope, be a blessing from God to the people of that place.”

In the month of October, Mr. Cobbs took charge of the Parish, the duties of which he continued to perform with unsurpassed zeal and devotion until the 1st of October, 1840, when he accepted a call to Cincinnati, and soon after was elevated to the Episcopate of Alabama. Mr. Cobbs, it is believed, was beloved by every member of his flock, and his labors in this Parish were abundantly successful. At the time he became the Rector of St. Paul's, there were hardly more than one hundred communicants, who, by God's blessing upon his labors, were increased to more than double that number.

During Mr. Cobbs' residence in Petersburg, there was a very unusual religious awakening pervading all denominations of christians, and affecting, more or less, the whole population of the city.

The congregation, under his charge, shared in the general feeling, which Mr. Cobbs encouraged by all lawful expedients, never departing from the prescribed services of the church. The writer had the privilege of being one of the clergymen, invited by the Rector, to come to his help during the daily services, which

were held for a number of months, at this propitious season, to break the bread of life to and satisfy the demand of a hungering and thirsting people, and he could not but admire the beautiful adaptation of the services of the church to such an exigency, supplying fit words for the expression of all the varieties of truly religious feeling, from the lowest depths of penitence to the loftiest flights of praise, and keeping all the tendencies to extravagance, incident to such occasions, within the scriptural limits, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

In Bishop Meade's address to the Convention, at Staunton, in 1842, he thus speaks of the results of the revival, to the church in Petersburg.

"I spent a week in Petersburg, enjoying much pleasure in beholding the rich fruits of God's grace, in blessing the word frequently and faithfully preached, and the services of the Church zealously and faithfully used by the Rector and other brethren, who, for the last three months, had been almost daily meeting with the people in the house of God, where they never seemed weary with calling on Him in prayer and hearing his truth. One of the results of this great grace on the means of Heaven's appointment was the confirmation of ninety-three persons, who, it is hoped, not merely with the mouth, but the full consent of the heart, renewed that solemn vow, promise, and profession, made at their baptism, and which none can make unless they are renewed in the spirit of their minds.

"While in Petersburg, I also admitted Rev. Aristides Smith to priest's orders, the candidate being presented by the Rev. Mr. Grammer, and the sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Cobbs."

In June, 1840, during Mr. Cobbs' administration, the ladies of the Wilmer Education Society proposed to the vestry of St. Paul's Church, to place at their disposal a certain proportion of the proceeds of their labor, to be appropriated to the support of a missionary in the town and suburbs of Petersburg, whenever a missionary could be obtained with the approbation of the Bishop of the Diocese.

The result of this movement was the appointment of the Rev. Churchill J. Gibson, who entered upon his duty as city missionary in October, 1841. In the absence of a church edifice, Mr. Gibson, was obliged to officiate in small and inconvenient rooms, hired for the occasion. Twenty-five communicants were transferred from St. Paul's church to Mr. Gibson as a nucleus around which to build a new congregation. With this little body-guard, the missionary entered into his new field of labor with such zeal and with such prospects of success, that the congregation of St. Paul's were induced to subscribe \$1,400 for a new church, which was erected on the banks of the river, adjacent to the manufacturing district, upon a lot generously presented by Robert B. Bolling of Centre Hill.

Bishop Johns, in his report of 1813, thus speaks of it—"On the 24th of February, I visited Petersburg. In the evening, I participated in the interesting ser-

vices of St. Paul's Church, where I was met by the Rev. Messrs. Berkeley, Massey, A. Smith and E. McGuire, who had assembled in Petersburg, to be present at the consecration of the Missionary Chapel.

“On the next day, I consecrated to the service of Almighty God, by the name of Grace Church, the appropriate building, erected for Missionary purposes, by the members of St. Paul's congregation, Petersburg. The sentence of consecration was read by the Rev. Mr. Gibson, who is officiating as the Missionary. Morning prayer by Rev. Mr. Massey, and the sermon by myself.

“Grace Church is a plain, but very neat and commodious building; it cost \$1,400, and it is paid for. The benevolent persons by whom it was erected, contribute annually \$500 for the support of the Missionary, whose prospects of usefulness are very encouraging.

“On Sunday morning, I preached in St. Paul's, and confirmed 20 persons; and in the afternoon at Grace Church, confirming 7 persons.”

At the same Convention, Grace Chapel was admitted into the Convention as an independent church, although still deriving its chief sustenance from the congregation of St. Paul's. Mr. Gibson has continued his labors with untiring zeal.

He has baptized 139 persons; buried 107; and presented for confirmation 46; making in addition to the 25 transferred from St. Paul's, 71 communicants; of which number, 18 have removed, or died; leaving the present number 53.

In November 1843, the writer of these lines, the present incumbent, was elected to succeed Mr. Cobbs. He accepted the call for six months; at the expiration of which time, it was his intention to have returned to his beloved Parishioners in Fauquier, who had kindly consented to wait for him. During these six months, God was pleased to bless his feeble labors by giving him many souls as seals to his ministry. Under these circumstances, the vestry of St. Paul's, having been pleased to communicate to the incumbent their entire approbation of his conduct and labors, and their opinion that God had crowned them with great success; and also to express the unanimous desire of the congregation, that he should become the permanent Pastor of the Church, the incumbent, by the advice of his Diocesan, and with the consent of all the parties concerned, determined to do so.

From that time to the present, he has continued to labor, “in weakness,” in the midst of as kind, and affectionate, and indulgent a people, as any Pastor was ever blessed withal.

During the past ecclesiastical year, a chapel, with free seats, has been built, by the diligence and liberality of some members of St. Paul's congregation, on Halifax street, in the suburbs of the city, opposite the quarter in which Grace Church is situated. The Rector of St. Paul's, who attempted to conduct a weekly service



there, was soon obliged to discontinue it on account of his delicate health ; and the service has devolved upon Mr. Gibson, to whom he is much indebted for his ready coöperation in *every labor of love*.

This chapel was consecrated by the name of St. Matthew's, by Bishop Meade, on the 15th of May, 1845 ; who also administered the rite of confirmation to three persons in the same.

A Sunday school, too, has been established at this chapel, conducted by some members of St. Paul's congregation, who deserve commendation for their persevering zeal, which has hitherto prevailed over many untoward obstacles.

May the Lord bless them and their labors.

Such is the history of Bristol Parish for 204 years, from its creation, by act of Assembly, to the present time. It is 60 years older than the county of Prince George, and more than 100 years older than the county of Dinwiddie, or the town of Petersburg. What changes have come over the face of the country, as well as its population and institutions, during that space of time ! Could the Queen of the Appomattox re-visit her ancient dominion, and see a populous town of the pale faces, where once stood the simple wigwams of her tribe, and cultivated fields waving with golden grain, where then were majestic forests fragrant with the wild flower which "raised its head, elastic from the airy tread," of her young warriors in the chase, she would exclaim, all, all is changed, but the bright blue sky of Heaven !

The history of Bristol Parish has been one of alternate prosperity and depression, furnishing a striking instance of the conservative properties of our noble old formularies ; which, like the majestic oak, will live in all climates, and through all seasons,—and though sometimes apparently dead, yet the principle of life is not extinct ; and at the first reviving ray from Heaven, will immediately begin to flow, ascending and pervading the entire organization, which is again clothed with all its ancient glory, and under whose refreshing shadow the weary and heavy-laden pilgrim may find sweet repose.

There is much in the history of the past, to encourage us for the future. In 1821, there were only 40 communicants in Bristol Parish ; and now, notwithstanding the severe losses recently sustained by death and emigration, there are more than three hundred. May the facts of this history make us more humble for our unfaithfulness, and more grateful for God's goodness ; "and may our light henceforth so shine before men, that others seeing our good works, may glorify our common father in Heaven."

GLEBE OF BRISTOL PARISH.

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On the 22nd of December, 1741, the vestry purchased 200 acres of land of Mr. Thomas Williams, for a glebe, for which they gave 200 pounds current money of Virginia. This was the first glebe ever owned by the Parish.

In 1769, the Assembly passed an act for the sale of this glebe, which was accordingly sold to William Brown, Esquire,—and the Rev. Mr. Harrison, at that time the incumbent of the Parish, was allowed 26 pounds per annum, in lieu of a glebe.

In 1772, the vestry purchased 490 acres of land of Mrs. Eliza Yates, for a glebe, for which they paid the sum of 350 pounds. A comfortable dwelling-house, with all necessary appurtenances, was erected on this farm by the vestry.

In 1801, R. Bolling and John Shore, church-wardens, were instructed to sell this glebe, and take bonds for the purchase money.

The glebe was afterwards sold, and a bond taken, obliging the purchaser to pay the interest of the proceeds of the sale to the Rev. Mr. Syme during his incumbency, and on his demise, to pay the principal to the overseers of the poor in the county of Prince George. The interest was punctually paid to Mr. Syme, and the principal now belongs to the aforesaid overseers of the poor.

## A P P E N D I X .

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The following epitaphs are published in this connection, because they are found within the limits of Bristol Parish, and concern persons who were once its officers and members. Some of them are published for the first time; and the others are taken from the "Bland Papers," which have been several times quoted in this tract.

### BLANDFORD CHURCH-YARD.

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Richard Yarbrough 1702—aged 87.

The above inscription is on a soft, free-stone flag. There is a trace above the cypher making it read 1762. From my knowledge of this stone, and acquaintance with engraving, I think 1702 was the original inscription.

J. DAVIDSON,  
*Keeper of grave-yard.*

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Here lyes in hopes of a blessed resurrection the body of Mrs. Lucy Williams wife of Tho. Williams, born Feb. ye 8th 1730—married Nov. ye 27th 1746—died July 25th 1747 aged 16 yrs.

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Here lyes the body of Mrs. Rachell Williams wife of Mr. Tho. Williams born April 15 1718—married August 28th 1735, died July 23rd 1746 aged 28 yrs.

Young men and women and all standers by  
That on these tombs do cast a wandering eye  
Call on the Lord while in your health and youth  
For die you must—it is a certain truth—  
Your life a shadow is more prized than gold  
As for example here you may behold  
Beneath these mournful tombs there lyeth three  
Which maketh eight of one family  
Two loving virtuous wives and children dear  
All died within two days and one whole year.

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Here lyes the body of Thomas Williams born  
in Shames Parish London in 1702 died Nov. 9th 1763.

Here lies the corps of Samuel Gordon son of  
David Gordon of Craig in the Stewartry of Kirkcubright  
North Britain who died 14th of April 1771—aged 51 yrs.

His shield has 3 boar's heads—is surmounted by a hand and cleaver  
His motto "Dread God."

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Here lyes the body of Jno Mackie son of P. Mackie late  
Provost of Wigdon in Scotland—died Octo 11th 1750  
aged 19 yrs.

---

Here lies the corps of Col Wm Poythress son of ✓  
Mr Jno Poythress—died 18th of Jan. 1763. aged 68 yrs.

---

Here lies the Corps  
of J. Poythress  
Daughter of Col Francis Eppes  
and wife to Col W. Poythress  
Died Octo 1750 aged 48 yrs.

---

Sacred to the memory of the  
REV. WILLIAM HARRISON  
who departed this life on the  
20th of Nov. 1814 aged 81 yrs.

In tender regard of whom his widow has caused this monument to be erected.  
Here let him rest in peace and let us try to live like him that we like him may  
die.

---

Farmingdale, or Kippax, was settled by Robert Bolling, whose first wife was  
a grand-daughter of Pochahontas. The subjoined epitaph is copied from his tomb-  
stone there.

Here lyeth interred in hope of a joyful resurrection,  
the body of ROBERT BOLLING son of JOHN and MARY  
BOLLING of Alhallows, Barkin Parish, Tower Street  
London. He was born the 26th of December in the  
year 1616 and came to Virginia, October the 2d  
1660 and departed this life the 17th day of July  
1709 aged 62 years, six months and twenty-one days.

MATOAX. ✓

This place is on the north side of the Appomattox river, above the falls, about a mile from Petersburg. The name Matoax, or Matoaca, is borrowed from the individual appellation of Pochahontas. The father of John Randolph, of Roanoke, John Randolph, Sr., resided at Matoax, and died there in 1775. It is commonly supposed that Jno. Randolph (the orator) was born there, but he was more probably born at Cawsons.

To the east of Matoax, on a rising ground, under a clump of oaks, are three tombstones, with Latin inscriptions, as follows:

Johannes Randolph. Arm.  
Ob. xxviii Octo.  
MDCCLXXV  
Æt xxxiv  
Non ossibus urna, nec mens  
Virtutibus absit.

---

J. H. S.  
Francescæ Tucker Blandæ ✓  
Conjugis  
Sti Georgii Tucker ✓  
Quis desiderio sit modus?  
Obiit xviii Januarii,  
MDCCLXXXVIII.  
Æt xxxvi.

---

Martha Hall  
Ob. iv Non. Mart.  
1784.  
Quam Sprevit Hymen, Pollux,  
Phæbusque coluere.

---

Tombstone at Greencroft, residence of Norborne Page, Esq., on the Appomattox, near Petersburg.

Here lyeth the body of William Skipwith  
Baronet, who deceased the 25th of Feby  
1764, aged 56 years. He descended from  
Sir Henry Skipwith of Prestwould in Leicester-  
shire, created Baronet by King James the  
first, was honored with King Charles the

first's commission for raising men against the usurping Powers and proved Loyal to his King, so that he was deprived of his estate by the Usurper, which occasioned his and his son's death, except Sir Gray Skipwith Grand-father of the above said Sir William Skipwith, who was obliged to come to Virginia for refuge, where the family hath since continued—

---

COL. JOHN BANNISTER.

This gentleman's father was an eminent Botanist, towards the close of the 17th century. In one of his botanical excursions, near the falls of the Roanoke river, he fell from a rock and was killed.

A plant of the Decandrous class, in honor of him, is called Banisteria. John Bannister, the son, was a member of the House of Burgesses—a delegate to congress in 1778-9, and one of the framers of the confederation.

He was twice married—his first wife was Mary Bland, sister of Theodorick Bland, Jr. :—this branch is now extinct. His second wife was Anne Blair. Col. Bannister resided near Petersburg, at Battersea, which house he built. He died in 1787, and lies buried in Dinwiddie county, at Hatcher's run.

---

BLAND GENEALOGY.

Richard, <sup>II</sup> eldest son of Richard, <sup>I</sup> was born at Jordan's, May 6th, 1710; he married Ann, the only daughter and heiress of Peter Poythress, gentleman, and has by his said wife 12 children.

Richard Bland, <sup>II</sup> father of the above children, died October 26, 1776, and was buried at Jordan's, Nov. 7th—aged 66 years,

---

RANDOLPH GENEALOGY.

Elizabeth Randolph married Theodorick Bland, by whom <sup>Richard I</sup> 1st Richard, of Jordan's Point, member of the Old Congress of 1775-76.

2. Theodorick, of Cawsons, who married Frances Bolling, daughter of Drury Bolling, by whom Theodorick, Mrs. Bannister, of Battersea, Mrs. Ruffin, Mrs. Eaton, Mrs. Haynes and Mrs. Randolph, (mother of John Randolph,) afterwards Mrs. Tucker.

3. Mary, who married Henry Lee, by whom Richard Henry, Mrs. Ball, and Mrs. Fitzhugh.

4. Elizabeth married William Beverly, of Blandford, by whom Robert and Elizabeth.

5. Ann, who married Robert Munford; John Randolph, of ~~Roanoke~~, married Frances, daughter of Theodorick Bland, of Cawsons, and Frances his wife.

---

HERE

are deposited the mortal remains  
of  
The Reverend Andrew Syme, D. D.,  
a native of Lanarkshire, in Scotland,  
and for more than forty years  
Rector of Bristol Parish, Virginia.  
He was born on the 22nd September, 1755.  
He died on the 26th of October, 1845.  
"An Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."

---

In the same grave are also interred  
The remains of his faithful and devoted wife,  
JEAN M. SYME,  
(Daughter of the late Reverend John Cameron, D. D.,)  
who was born in the County of Mecklenburg,  
on the 26th of October, 1775,  
and departed this life, in Petersburg,  
on the 2nd of April, 1846.

"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
And in their deaths they were not divided."

This monument, sacred to their memories, is erected by  
their only child,  
JOHN W. SYME.

---

The following persons, who bore the same names with individuals now living in the Parish, were baptized by the minister of the same more than 100 years ago, viz: Edmund and Agnes Birchett, Robert and Ann Bolling, James and Thomas Handamay, Peter Jones, Wm. Poythress, Abram Bucham and Reuben Peebles. Hintons, Vaughans, Pegrams, Petersons, Walthalls, Sturdivants, Stiths, Rowletts, Braggs, &c. Battes, Bannisters, Gilliams, Hammonds, Blands, Chambliss'.





# CATALOGUE

## OF THE RECTORS OF BRISTOL PARISH,

FROM THE YEAR 1720 TO THE YEAR 1846.

1720. Rev. George Robertson. 1740. " Richard Heartswell. 1740. " Robert Ferguson. 1749. " Eleazer Robertson. 1752. " Thomas Wilkinson, 1762. " William Harrison.		1784. Rev. John Cameron. 1794. " Andrew Syme. 1834-39. " H. M. Bartlett. 1839. Rt. Rev. William Meade. 1840. Rev. N. H. Cobbs. 1843. " P. Slaughter. ✓
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## MEMBERS

OF THE

## VESTRY OF BRISTOL PARISH,

*From the year 1720 to 1846, with the date of the election of each.*

1720. Robert Bolling, Robert Munford, ✓ A. Hall, L. Green, Henry Randolph, Thomas Bott. ✓ 1721. William Kennon, G. Wilson, Peter Jones, George Archer, Robert Kennon. 1722. J. Herbert.	1723. ✓ Drury Bolling. ✓ 1727. William Poythress. ✓ 1729. Theo. Field. 1731. A. Bevell. 1734. Charles Fisher, William Starke. 1735. D. Walker, F. Poythress, J. Bannister.	1739. William Hamlin. 1740. Theo. Bland. ✓ 1742. T. Short. 1744. W. Eppes, G. Smith, S. Dewey. 1746. S. Gordon, J. Boisseau, J. Murray.
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1749.  
A. Walker.  
1750.  
T. Williams,  
Alexander Bolling.  
1756.  
William Eaton. ✓  
1762.  
R. Atkinson,  
G. Nicholas.  
1763.  
Sir William Skipwith.  
1761.  
N. Raines.  
1765.  
John Ruffin.  
1766.  
R. Bolling.  
1767.  
William Call.  
1769.  
Dr. Theo. Bland. ✓  
1770.  
Richard Taylor.  
1771.  
Thomas Jones,  
P. Jones.  
1772.  
John T. Wheat.  
1775.  
Robert Skipwith,  
W. Brown.  
1779.  
William Robertson,  
John Kirby.  
1782.  
R. Bolling,  
James Field,  
Wm. Digges,  
1784.  
B. Kirby,  
R. Turnbull.  
1788.  
John Shore,  
T. G. Peachy.  
A. G. Strachan,  
J. Hull,  
J. Geddy,  
R. Gregory.  
J. Bonner.  
1790.  
E. Harrison,  
A. Gracie,  
T. Bolling,

1790.  
J. Campbell,  
R. Williams,  
D. Hardaway.  
John Grammer.  
1794.  
G. K. Taylor.  
1795.  
T. Withers,  
A. Macrae.  
W. Prentiss,  
E. Stott.  
1796.  
J. Osborne.  
1797.  
R. Moore.  
1799.  
D. Maitland.  
1800.  
J. Morrison,  
J. Geddy,  
C. Stimpson,  
D. Anderson.  
1801.  
J. Freeland.  
1802.  
G. Pegram.  
1807.  
R. Colquhoun,  
W. Baird,  
J. Bell,  
P. Haxall.  
1808.  
J. Dunlop.  
1811.  
D. M'Kenzie,  
W. Moore.  
W. Colquhoun,  
W. Cosling,  
D. Walker,  
W. Cameron,  
J. G. Davis.  
1813.  
Wm. Cumming.  
1815.  
J. Hammond,  
N. Friend,  
J. Wilders,  
W. Haxall.  
1817.  
J. F. May.

1822.  
J. C. Arnistead,  
W. Gilliam,  
John Bragg.  
1824.  
J. V. Wilcox.  
1825.  
W. French.  
1827.  
W. Jones,  
T. B. Lippitt.  
1829.  
Joseph Bragg.  
1830.  
C. F. Osborne,  
J. Brander,  
T. N. Lee,  
W. H. Macfarland,  
J. Macfarland.  
1832.  
Wm. S. Simpson.  
1833.  
A. B. Spooner.  
1834.  
J. D. White.  
1837.  
J. W. Pegram,  
R. G. Strachan,  
B. B. Blume,  
J. D. Townes,  
D. C. Butts.  
1838.  
M. Macfarland,  
G. H. Jones.  
1839.  
T. S. Beckwith,  
R. B. Bolling,  
J. Y. Stockdell.  
1840.  
D. May.  
1841.  
William Pannill,  
R. C. Egerton.  
1842.  
N. M. Martin.  
1843.  
J. S. Patterson,,  
T. S. Gholson,  
L. Peebles,  
John Rowlett,  
John A. Peterson.  
1846.  
Wm. Maghee.

LIST OF LAY DELEGATES  
TO THE  
DIOCESAN CONVENTIONS,

*From 1785 to 1846.*

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1785. Robert Bolling.	1814. William Cameron.
1786. " "	1815. " "
1787. John Shore.	1816. John Grammer.
1788. " "	1817. " "
1789. William Robertson.	1818. " "
1790. J. Campbell.	1819. R. Bolling.
1791. T. G. Peachy.	1820. John Grammer.
1792. Archibald Gracie.	1821. " "
1793. Alexander Macrae.	1822. J. Gilliam.
1794. G. Keith Taylor.	1823. R. Bolling.
1795. Robert Bolling.	1824. John Grammer, Jr.
1796. Alexander Macrae.	1825. John Grammer.
1797. G. K. Taylor.	1826. H. Montgomery.
1798. John Grammer.	1827. T. B. Lippitt.
1799. " "	1828. John Grammer.
1800. William Prentiss.	1829. Thomas Withers, Jr.
1801. John Grammer.	1830. " "
1802. David Maitland.	1831. Robert Bolling.
1804. John Grammer.	1832. " "
1805. " "	1833. John Grammer.
1806. " "	1834. Robert Bolling.
1807. J. Freeland.	1836. R. G. Strachan.
1808. " "	1839. M. Macfarland.
1809. W. Baird.	1840. " "
1810. " "	1841. David May.
1811. William Moore.	1842. " "
1812. " "	1843. " "
1813. " "	1844. Lemuel Peebles.
	1845. S. L. Watkins.

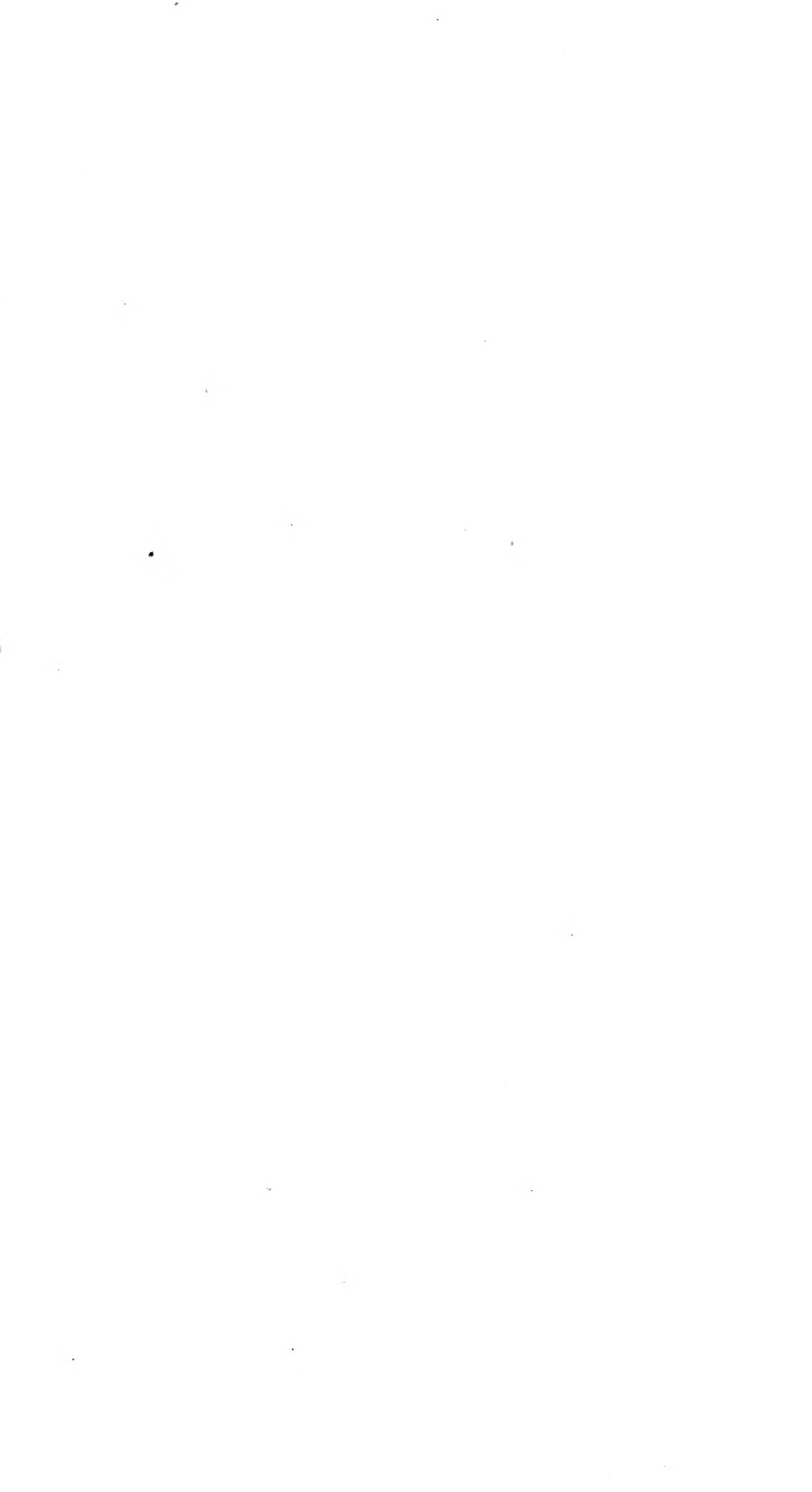
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Grace Church, - - - Rev. C. J. Gibson, *Rector.*

VESTRYMEN.

Charles Kent.	F. Pucci.
Jos. Hurt.	A. Little.
Charles Friend.	J. G. Guthrey.
Sher. Smith.	William Davidson.





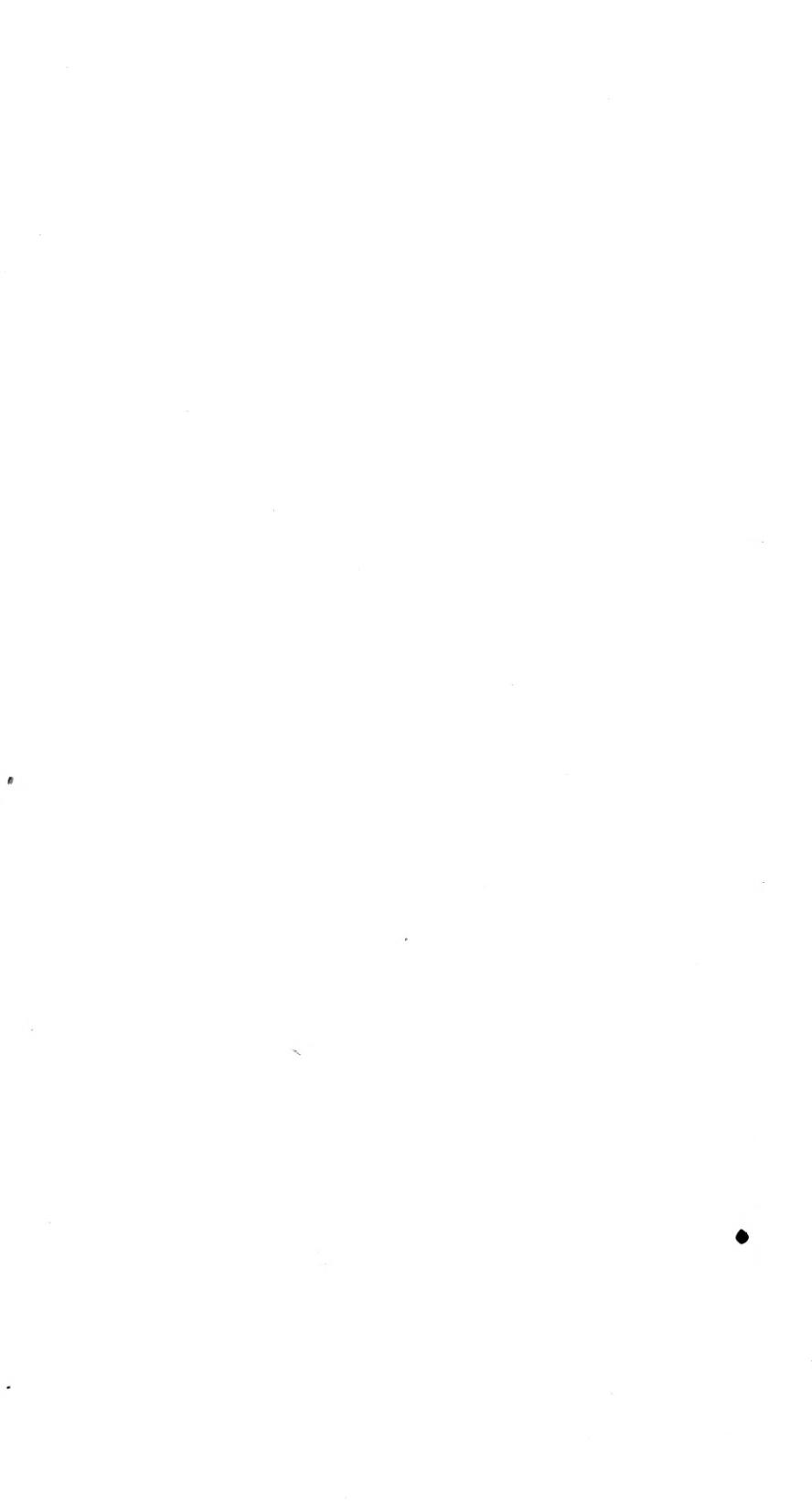


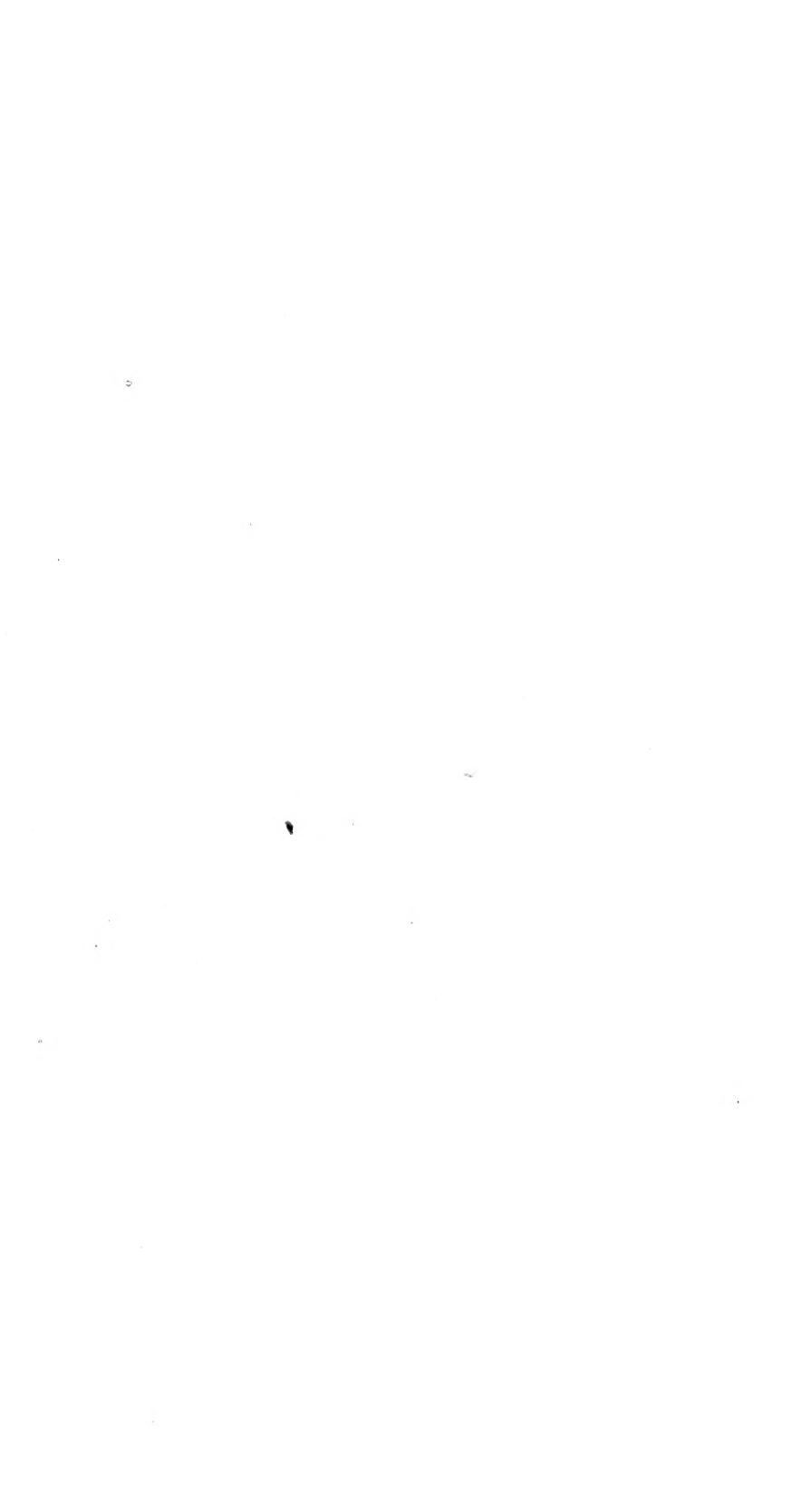




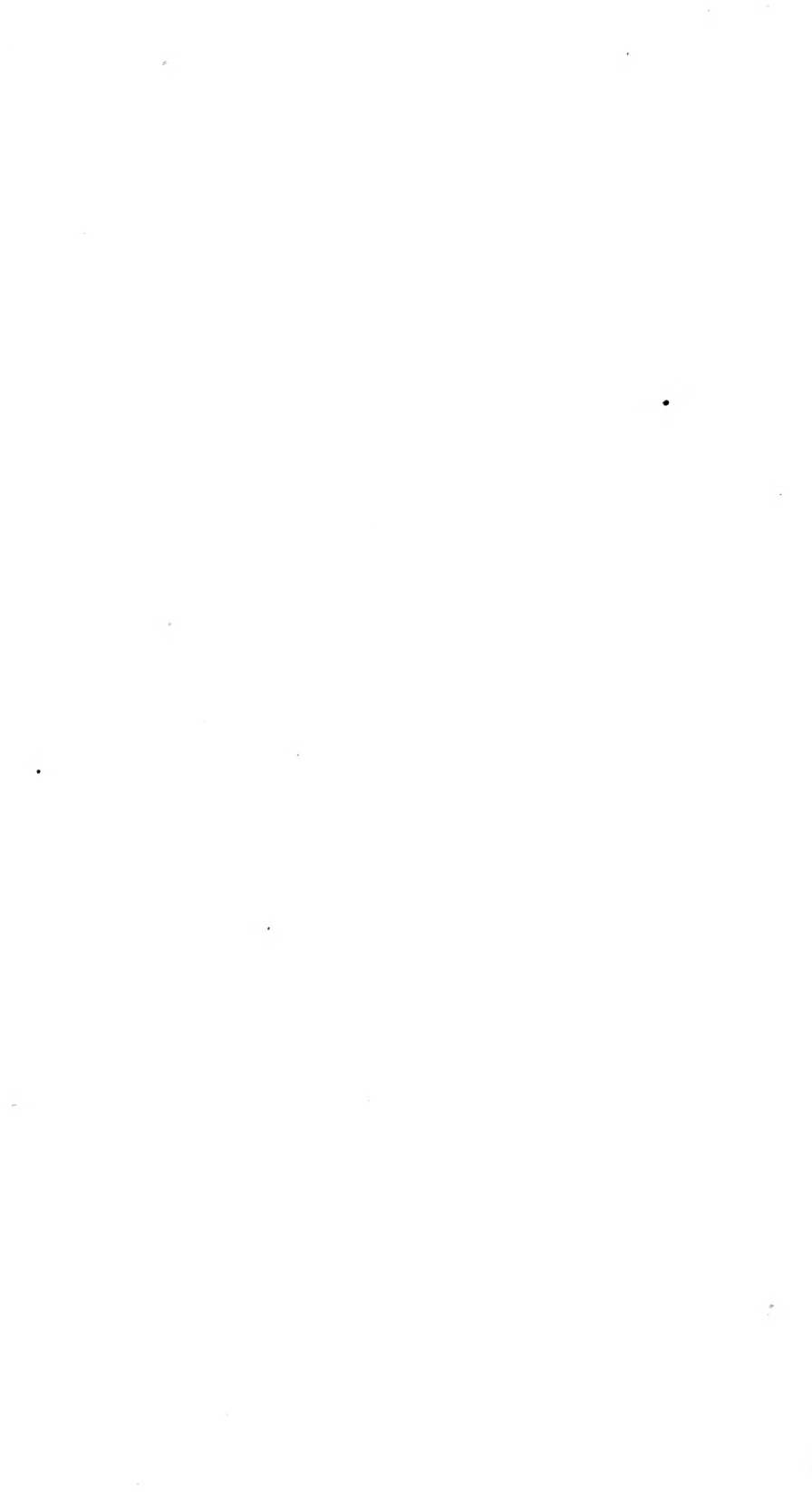






















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